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Edited by Naji Al-hadithi
Translated by Khalid Kishtainy

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Translator's Preface

The Man behind the Words

It is not customary for a translator to introduce his translation. The less his presence is felt, the better, but this book is a piece of work on which his opinion may benefit both judge and jury.

Because Arabic is an abstract and rhythmic language, full of rhetoric and ancient imagery, it is a continual ordeal for any translator. This was to be expected in the present work, particularly as it consisted of a number of pieces given in the old Arabic medium of oral improvisation. But the translator was soon struck by a new problem. Saddam Hussein does not lean heavily on the conventional style of Arabic political oratory, or on borrowing from classic, or vernacular images and proverbs.

Instead of facing the challenges he expected, the translator was simply puzzled and confused by a novel use of simple words delivered in a cool and detached tone. For example, there is ridda, *the term applied to the early Muslims who reverted to their former heathenism after Mohammed's death. But what does the speaker mean by it now, when he applies it to a twentieth century situation? Would it be "defection", "apostasy", "revisionism", "regression" or "reversion"? Finally, we decided upon the*

last of these, with its correlatives "reversionist" and "reversionary", as the nearest equivalent of ridda. *There are also* muntalaq, muhassila, masira, sigha, *etc. All such words, coined as political terms by Saddam Hussein, have now become part of the political and journalistic language of Iraq; yet no dictionary can help us.*

As this translator puzzled over Saddam's new verbal coinage, a certain picture started to take shape before his eyes. Most of these words have something in common which conjures up a world of dynamic movement; and this is the world of Saddam Hussein, with masira *as its emblem. He, his party, his revolutionary council, his army, people, country and Arab homeland are all surging in this great "march", or* masira. *And true to Arabic form, this abstract word has become a concrete thing* per se, *with its own system and demands.*

Wherever the people are now they will be elsewhere tomorrow and the reality of the present will soon be the fairy tales of tomorrow. The new, old, conventional, contemporary, phase, present, future, development, evolution *keep recurring in his speeches. I have read hardly any contemporary Marxist leader more obsessed with the dynamic change of society and dialectical appreciation of history than Saddam Hussein. Yet, throughout his speeches and statements, he makes no reference to Marx, Marxism or dialectical materialism. He is simply applying what he learned from his own personal meteoric life as a political fighter in the uncertain environment of Iraq.*

The Chairman of the Revolution Command Council and Secretary of the Regional Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party was born in 1937 in a village adjoining the small town of Tikrit, a hundred miles north of Baghdad. Like many of his friends, he had to leave his village behind and move to the capital to pursue his secondary school

education. In those days, secondary schools in Iraq wielded more power than the Houses of Parliament do in Britain today. Saddam Hussein was soon arrested and expelled. He became a full-time political activist in the ranks of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and joined in the attempt on Kassem's life, or, in a broader sense, the attempt to put Iraq back on the path to Pan-Arab unity. Pan-Arab politics have remained one of his obsessions ever since his student days, but, to him, Arab unity and revival cannot be achieved outside the framework of a socialist state or without mass support. He is probably the only responsible leader with a hotline to the masses, a private telephone line directly connected with the national network and continuously used by the public to put their grievances directly to him.

His other obsession seems to be his concern for learning. During his exile in Cairo, he found time in the midst of frenzied activities to obtain his secondary school certificate. On his return to Iraq, he availed himself of a similar opportunity when he joined the Faculty of Law in 1964, and covered two years of study whilst serving a prison sentence for his activities against the Abdul Salam Arif regime. He finished his studies after his release, and married a teacher, of course.

Saddam Hussein was compared by Christopher Hitchens of the New Statesman *with President Nasser. As a translator of many of the memorable speeches of the late Egyptian leader, I am struck by the similarity of aspirations and the contrast of approach and style. Nasser's key words were "pride" and "dignity". Saddam Hussein's key words are "march", "calculation", "formula", "premise", "resultant", and* "point de départ". *The words of both respond to the needs of their countries. After centuries of humiliation and servitude, Egypt needed pride, dignity and confidence in herself more than most other things, and*

Nasser responded to the need with his intimate vernacular and high-sounding words of national exaltation.

Iraq's need is quite different. With a long history of anarchy and lawlessness, the Iraqis continued jumping from the frying-pan into the fire and back again until 1968. They seem to have been heeding the words of Alexander the Great when he said that the people of the Orient had become slaves because they hadn't learnt to use the word "No!". Ever since Alexander's death in their midst, the Mesopotamians have taken his words to heart and have said nothing but "No" to each other and everything. How to make them say "Yes" became the vexatious problem of all Iraqi statesmen.

What Iraq needed most were the qualities of an ordered brain, a mathematical mind and a shrewd foresight backed up by the caution and the patience of the scientist. Saddam Hussein is no mathematician or scientist, but he could have become one. For him every problem is a complex of forces, composites and resultants, requiring calculations, scientific formulae, logical deductions and, above all, a cautious approach. The last quality, coupled with his aversion to emotionalism, may cause the reader to see his response to some questions as ambiguous. A man of thought?

Here is a mass leader who uses an elitist language to instil order, calculation and prudence into the volatile mind of the Iraqi masses. Instead of such common emotional words as "heart" and "feelings" we find a striking and abundant use of "brain", "mind", and "thinking", which he personifies in a way which is typical of the Semitic languages. He does the same with "the Revolution" and "the political leadership".

Saddam Hussein also differs from the late President Nasser and from most contemporary Arab leaders by being a civilian. This presents an amusing paradox, for there is

more military matter in his vision and understanding than we find in many generals. Here we come to another list of his personal vocabulary: "battle", "trenches", "fighting", "walls", "battlefield", "bastions", "reserves", "mobilisation", "strategy", "tactics", etc. Problems for him are battles, with enemies and allies outflanking each others' trenches and battlements. When the Americans were annoyed with Egypt, Nasser's reply to them was to say that if they did not like it, they could jump in the sea and drink the water. When Saddam Hussein found himself in a similar situation, he said that if they struck at Iraq's outer walls, Iraq would strike at their inner walls, for "whoever tries to climb over our fence, we shall try to climb over his roof".

This may have struck his foreign listeners as another piece of Arabic rhetoric, but this is not so. When only a young student, on the orders of the Party he ran and shot at close range, in the midst of the heavy guarded Rashid Street, the omnipotent "sole leader", General Kassem. Young Saddam escaped with a bullet in his leg and sought refuge among the peasants. With the help of a crude sickle, he removed the bullet, packed his wound with "medicated" butter and crossed the great Syrian desert on a mule. The legend had already preceded him to Damascus and prompted its crowds to come out and see him. Among them was Michael Aflaq, the founding leader of the Ba'th Party. To his surprise, he discovered that Saddam Hussein was then only a junior supporter of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, with a long way still ahead of him in indoctrination and training. "Never mind about that", thought the Ba'thist leader, and himself recited the Ba'thist oath of allegiance, which the new recruit repeated. Thus was Saddam Hussein anointed a full member of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, and the encounter led to the long-standing affection between

the two men. He soon returned to Baghdad to find himself once more taking part with his comrades in the attack on the centre of power. A man of action?

Saddam Hussein seems to be one of the rare, lucky men in whom thought and action are finely matched, and evidence of both qualities is amply provided in this collection of statements, which should be read with interest for a good reason. Men of thought or action are rarely men of words, and Saddam Hussein is no exception. He is not a great orator and his speeches are short and rare. His press conferences are even less frequent. For him, time is better spent in thinking, rethinking, relearning and silently working, and he has a great deal to do of all these. His party, the Arab Ba'th (Resurrection) Socialist Party, has pan-Arab aspirations. So far the ABSP has won almost all its internal battles of immediate concern. The Kurdish question is settled, the entire oil wealth of Iraq has been successfully nationalised, the National Front is more consolidated than ever before, the people are experiencing unprecedented stability and prosperity, and all former enemies are out of the way, demoralised, or won over. The Middle East stage direction reads: Enter Iraq, followed by men and minerals. *Saddam Hussein is now 40 years old, and the observer of the Middle East scene would be well advised to keep a watch on this ascending star.*

"We are still within the stage of calculation of mere aspirations; we are still at the beginning of the road which we have resolved to cover: the road towards the building of socialism, the defeat of imperialism and the creation of this country as a safe base for Arab struggle in general and a model experiment illuminating the entire region of the Middle East."

Pan-Arab aspirations are the torment of the Arabic language translator because of their unique concepts. To

start with, Arab nationalism itself may seem a misnomer. There are two words which keep recurring in these speeches: qawmia *and* watania. *The first considers the citizen in relation to his people or nation:* qawm*; the other in relation to his homeland:* watan. *Arab ideologists paid little attention to the contradiction which might arise. Indeed, there was a time when Arab nationalists were accused of being unpatriotic, sacrificing the interests of their own country to that of some major Arab power, whether Egypt, Iraq or Syria. But then, a true Arab nationalist does not think of Egypt, Syria or Iraq as countries; they are only regions of the vast Arab homeland extending from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. This complicates our work even further. Nationalists of the Nasserist school called each one of these parts* iqlim *(region); hence the Syrian and Egyptian regions of the ill-fated United Arab Republic. The Ba'thists called them* qutr*, which has no real equivalent in English, but denotes more autonomy and independence. Translators have been forced to translate* qutr *into "region" and* qutri *into "regional". We succumbed to the same necessity.*

"The National Front" presented us with a formidable task. It makes use of both watania *and* qawmia*, as* qawmia *refers to something wider than the goal to which nationalists normally aspire; we preferred to call it Pan-Arabism. Hence the "Progressive Pan-Arab National Front".*

One more problem associated with these speeches is the fact that they were all improvised. Arabic improvisations are difficult enough to print, let alone to translate. Let us hope that what the reader may miss in translation will be more than compensated for in having first-hand statements delivered without pretension or preparation by a responsible leader.

The Nationalisation Decree

On 1st June 1973 Saddam Hussein gave an interview to the correspondent of *Al-Thawra*. The occasion was the first anniversary of the issue of the Oil Nationalisation Decree. Iraq nationalised the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) on 1st June 1972 after giving notice to the company in mid-May of the same year to concede Iraqi demands by raising the level of crude oil production and settling outstanding debts due to the government. The Iraq Petroleum Company was owned jointly by the two US companies, Standard Oil of New Jersey and Mobil Oil (23.75 per cent), the French group Compagnie Française des Pétroles (23.75 per cent), the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch-Shell group (23.75 per cent), British Petroleum (23.75 per cent), and Gulbenkian (5 per cent). The other two foreign oil-producing companies in Iraq were the Basrah Petroleum Company (BPC) in the south and the Mosul Petroleum Company (MPC) in the north, and both had the same ownership as IPC. In 1971 IPC's share of Iraq's total oil production was 51,000,000 tons, or about 62 per cent. The Managing Director of IPC was Mr Geoffrey Stockwell.

IPC refused to recognise the Nationalisation Decree, but the success of the operation eventually forced the company to drop all its claims, and an agreement was reached to this effect on 1st March 1973. The agreement waived all claims on the government and provided for a payment of £141 million in settlement of outstanding debts. The Mosul Petroleum Company was also handed over to the government against the delivery of 15 million tons of Iraq oil. The Basrah Petroleum Company was left untouched.

In his first question the interviewer refers to the "revolution led by the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party since July 17/30". On 17th July 1968 the Ba'th Party achieved power in Iraq through a bloodless revolution. A precarious government lasted for two weeks until the Party decided to reorganise the government by

removing from office a faction of doubtful allegiance. The two dates, 17th and 30th July 1968, therefore complement each other in the eye of Iraqis.

Question: Some people describe the Decree of the 1st June as a "revolution" in the sense that it is an event *per se*, unconnected with the march of the revolution led by the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party since 17/30 July 1968. What do you think of this description of the decree and what are your views on the links between the nationalisation process and the march of the Revolution as a whole and its future aims?

Answer: Despite the difficulties encountered by any man in dealing with an issue when he is part of the leadership which created and directed that issue, despite the embarrassment I feel when I remember that this issue belongs first and foremost to the Party and the people, and although the leadership of the Revolution has not yet become accustomed since 17/30 July 1968 to the type of direct speaking required by the question about aspects of the strategic thinking and the unpublicised tactical action and requirements of the Revolution, it might still be useful to place certain facts before the people to enable them to realise where they stand, and what responsibilities they have to shoulder to continue their march. If we talk about nationalisation as a revolutionary operation confined to the

1st June or to the period extending between the Ultimatum given to the companies on 17th May 1972 and the adoption of the Nationalisation Decree, we would be unfair to the Decree itself, to our people, and to the Party, as we would be concealing vital facts. The motive of some people in talking about the 1st June 1972 as a revolution, and talking about the 1st March 1973 as a victory and a revolution *per se* or as a final climax, may be related to their enthusiasm for the two events and their regard for the determination and skilful planning behind them both. But we have to put enthusiasm aside and evaluate the two events in accordance with objective and revolutionary standards.

The 1st June was not a revolution *per se*; it was part of a revolution, an act in harmony with its concepts and closely linked with its march. Indeed, it was an essential part of this march. Neither the 1st June, nor subsequently the 1st March was a final climax of the upsurge of the Revolution, but they were certainly the climax of the phase in which the two events took place. The 1st June and the 1st March were a logical outcome, and indeed an inevitable outcome of the very nature of the march which started on 17/30 July 1968 and the ingenious political thinking and revolutionary will-power embodied in the leadership of the Party and the Revolution, who were the vanguard of this march through its various phases. When we issued the Nationalisation Decree there were many (among whom there were undoubtedly people of good will) who thought that the series of measures, activities and alliances which we undertook, whether on the national, Arab or international levels, were directed in particular towards the goal of nationalisation. In reality these measures, activities and alliances were neither directed towards this goal nor connected with our plan to attain it; they were rather directed to and linked with a broader strategy than this goal, that is the strategy of

the Revolution which our Party has led since 17/30 July up to the present day. Nationalisation was a part of it.

If these measures, activities and alliances had been directed to that goal, the situation would have been entirely different, as they would have had a temporary character, a tactical character. They would have been viewed also in a different light, especially as we had already accomplished the 1st March victory and compelled the monopolistic companies to concede our legitimate rights.

Rather, we regard the issue differently. The 1st June and afterwards the 1st March are an integral part of the forward march of the Revolution. The premises behind them are part of the premises of the march of the Revolution and form part of the requirement for the realisation of its aims in achieving unity, liberty and socialism.

The political mind of the Revolution has managed to transform all these factors to the benefit of making the nationalisation process succeed within the framework of the development of the Revolution. It secured all the requirements which made nationalisation possible from the leadership's point of view. Thus when the decision was made an irresistible atmosphere for it prevailed. To the same extent, the leadership assembled all the requirements needed for its success after its adoption. The most important of these and the root cause for gaining moral and physical support was the fact that it was a decision for which we, the people and the leadership, carried full responsibility. Thus the support of brothers and friends became natural and an honour and a duty from which nobody, I think, sought to disassociate himself.

Question: How did the leadership reach the "nationalisation point"? Was it a sudden decision or was it a calculated step? If it was a calculated decision, what

preparations were undertaken beforehand and in what circumstances? In what direction did the speculations and conclusions of the other parties move?

Answer: Our definition of the phase through which the Revolution is now passing, as one of achieving all the tasks of liberation and the establishment of a people's democracy, necessarily means the full liberation of the oil wealth so it can be placed under the sovereignty of the people and in the service of the central plan of the Revolution. Therefore, nationalisation was a basic aim of the Revolution and a part of it. If it had not been achieved, then our estimate of the stage covered by the Revolution towards realising its plans and aims would have been different from what it is now. However, the basic point is not that of establishing the nationalisation slogan as an aim on paper. Some even say that the nationalisation slogan is quite common and everyone is calling for it, and so on. Thus anyone could strike upon the nationalisation idea by reading the various books which deal with other people's experiences, especially with regard to nationalisation.

The basic point with which we were faced was not establishing that slogan, as I have said before, but rather its application: that is, the nationalisation of the oil industry and nothing else, in Iraq and nowhere else, and all within the framework of our circumstances and not within the framework of any other circumstances. Hence, the issue of reaching "the nationalisation point", as mentioned in the question, assumes a different and special position and the resolution acquires, without any vain exaggeration, a particular importance.

The discussion should not centre on the idea of nationalisation, or the idea of liberating the oil wealth as an abstract matter. It should centre upon the political thinking

and analysis which brought the idea to fruition, crystallised it and applied it. Certainly, if the application had not succeeded, if the result had been something different from the victory of the 1st March, and if a financial disaster or an outcome similar to that of former attempts at nationalisation had resulted, many people would have spoken differently about nationalisation, and in a different tone. The march of the Revolution and the very nature of the phase to which we have referred pointed towards the inevitability of dealing with the issue of the national wealth and particularly the oil wealth, and defining our relationship with the foreign companies. This is what the leadership resolved, because the status of the monopolistic companies and their behaviour were contradictory to the interests of the country. It was essential to resolve this contradiction by gaining control of our wealth, and the recovery of our full rights. In such an assessment it was essential for the leadership to consider the various probable consequences. First, there was the likelihood of the obstinacy of the companies in the face of our rightful demands. When the time came to ask the companies to draw up a new formula for our relationship other than the formula of plunder and blackmail, it was possible that the companies would respond with measures designed to bleed our resources and abort our attempt. Therefore, a decision like that of the Nationalisation of 1st June 1972 had to be studied before that date, together with all its requirements, dimensions and consequences. To put it on record, the scientific research on the nationalisation of the oil industry began during July and August 1970 and after the Government had entered into undeclared negotiations with the companies in which we felt their obduracy towards our rightful demands. The nationalisation formula was also considered in detail and with care during January and February 1972, when we

were negotiating with the companies. The indications suggested then that they were insisting on the same old formula for our relationship without any change. At that time, our financial and economic resources were being managed in accordance with a new formula, which took into account the probable results of the developments in our relationship with the companies according to the calculations of the leadership and a determination to uphold our rightful demands and to issue unilateral legislation should the companies persist in their attitudes. At that time, crucial passages of the Nationalisation Decree which was issued on 1st June 1972 had already been drafted. It is worth pointing out here that the 1st of June Decree as a revolutionary act, and the 1st of March as a decisive victory thereafter, came as a surprise not only to the companies and the imperialist powers, but also to many people of good will in Iraq, the Arab World and the rest of the world. But if the march of the Revolution had been studied differently, and the Party's planning and the leadership's psychology had been more accurately examined with a different approach from that which was actually followed between 30th June 1968 and 1st June 1972, the conclusions of friends and foes would have been different.

The revolutionary political mind which has guided the Revolution benefited greatly from the method used by the companies and the imperialist powers in reaching their conclusions. We could compare these advantages with those gained by the leaders of the Soviet October Socialist Revolution from the ignorance of the capitalist world and the imperialist powers of the techniques of the socialist revolution and the art of applying socialist ideas in accordance with several formulas, whose tactical nature may not appear to the outside to be connected or progressing. That is, they benefited from the ignorance of the imperialist

powers and the capitalist class of the arts of revolutionary tactics. The October Revolution benefited from this and managed to move from one phase to the next in its development. The political mind which led the July Revolution greatly benefited from previous experience and particularly from the past experience of the Party in Iraq and Syria.

The ill-assorted alliances developed during those experiments ended in favour of the side tending to reversion (from the Party's principles: Arabic *ridda*), and the threats voiced by various leaders against the interests of imperialism achieved no tangible results on a realistic level. Neither did they turn towards a revolutionary solution. Slogans were issued without any way being found to implement them.

These precedents made the companies and the imperialist powers err in assessing the situation. They imagined that 17th July would end without developing into the 30th July. They imagined that the statement of 11th March was a temporary tactical measure to pass through one particular phase. They considered our relations with progressive forces and socialist countries a form of transient alliance. They interpreted the ultimatum of 17th May 1972 in the same way. We wasted no tears over the wrong conceptions and assessments of the companies and the imperialist powers. On the contrary, we benefited from them in accelerating the trend in favour of settling matters in accordance with the high strategic aims of the Party and the Revolution.

In the same way the companies and the imperialist powers erroneously imagined that our visit to the Soviet Union which preceded 1st June, and the clause included in the Iraqi-Soviet Treaty which stipulated Soviet support for Iraq in its endeavour to liberate its oil wealth, were simply tactics and a form of pressure upon them to extract the best

possible terms from them. Because of these false impressions and miscalculations they imagined after the 1st June that the nationalisation resolution had been drafted in Moscow.

Until the 1st June and the moment of the announcement of nationalisation the companies did not imagine that we would dare to embark on nationalisation. Here we must make it clear that because we expected the companies to resort to a war of attrition against us, it would have been stupid not to prepare for a decisive and deterrent struggle against them. It would be foolish for a political leader not to choose to do battle in a field outside his own external wall rather than let the enemies infiltrate inside and compel him to fight within his own house. When the companies started to reduce production, they sought to put us on the defensive, to place us in a state of war without the advantage of our outer barricades and to join battle very close to our inner gates. In such kind of combat, even if victory does not go to the invader, it is never on the side of the defender who is fighting right inside his own home. When the companies tried to engage us in a trial of strength at an early stage, they wanted to bleed the resources of Iraq, both its economic resources and the moral resources of the people. They sought to paralyse the mind of the leadership of the Party and the Revolution.

Thus, the leadership had to enter the decisive battle without letting the companies have a lengthy "trial of strength" period, of which the outcome would have been in their interest. On this basis, we issued the Ultimatum of 17th May 1972. The short period of the Ultimatum (two weeks) was carefully considered from this angle. We did not allow the negotiations which were conducted at the end of the period to take more than one day. The political mind of the Revolution refused to extend the Ultimatum despite the

companies' persistence and despite the extensive advice and counsel it received at that time.

There is another aspect to this battle. From the very beginning the leadership avoided making calculations in the conventional manner because following beaten tracks would not have secured the essential requirements to enable the political mind to issue the Nationalisation Decree. It was therefore essential to calculate in a different way. A decisive and final decision to nationalise the oil industry, particularly in the current circumstances of Iraq and of the region as a whole, was not a road that had been travelled before. It is true that Musaddiq travelled along this road previously, but the results in this case pointed towards failure rather than success. Although we recognised the difference between the two experiments and between their local, international and regional backgrounds, the adoption of a decision of the type of the 1st of June Decree nevertheless meant that success would certainly be a great credit not only to the leadership of the Party and the Revolution, but also to the whole Iraqi people. Yet failure, with all its historical responsibility, would have fallen on the leadership alone. The leadership consciously chose this road because whoever takes upon himself to be in the vanguard of the Arab struggle must always be ready to shoulder such responsibilities. Leaderships undertaking such a role must be ready to pay the price of their responsibilities.

We did not refer to the figures and statistics on which our calculations for the battle were based. We did not mention anything about our financial position before the 1st June and before the 1st March, because any talk in the old style would merely have undermined the determination of the people. In speaking to the people, we therefore emphasised our new approach and new calculations which could

not be understood or implemented by any computer. Only the mind of a revolutionary who looks differently at the present and future data could have made these calculations.

On the other hand, we in the leadership of the Party and the Revolution have never overlooked the need for accuracy of calculations, and we assessed and managed our economic and financial situation carefully. At the same time we realised that we had no opportunity to save large sums of money to be deposited in banks as a reserve to cover the risks which could arise after nationalisation. We were aware that the companies and the imperialist powers could find out our true financial position. On the basis of our concern for accurate calculations, we decided during the first few days after nationalisation to transfer our hard currency from foreign banks to others which do not come under the influence of the monopolistic companies and the countries affected by nationalisation, to prevent them from freezing these assets as Britain and France had done following the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956. We are certain that the companies, who must have known of this measure, again interpreted it wrongly as a kind of pressure, and part of our tactics to reach a better agreement. Their imagination did not extend to perceiving that this action was part of the plan to nationalise the oil industry. The slogan repeated by the media between 17th May and 1st June, "No Retreat but Advance", which was echoed in songs and chants by the people, was first mentioned in an internal bulletin addressed to the Party cadre about the confrontation with the monopolies. *Al-Thawra* newspaper continued explaining the situation and escalating the battle from day to day in a way which could not have had a conventional ending.

During those days, we published in full the minutes of our negotiations with the companies. It was clear that any

"reasonable" leadership would not have escalated the situation to such a critical degree, without having made up their mind to reach a decisive resolution. In spite of all this the companies continued to assess the situation by the old methods. They considered the position in the light of their earlier experience with the former regimes in Iraq and in the region. They continued to believe that the Revolution would not dare to embark on nationalisation.

At that time certain French circles disagreed with the companies and their assessments and calculated that the Iraqi Government might take a unilateral decision. But certainly, even these circles, which were more intelligent than the companies, did not imagine that the decision would involve the nationalisation of the company. On the basis of their assessments they tried to convince the other parties in the companies to modify their position. The French Ambassador contacted the Secretary General of the follow-up committee, advising delay in making a unilateral decision in the hope of being able to convince Stockwell, the representative of the companies, that it was necessary to give in to the Government's demands. A short while before the expiry of the second Ultimatum (at 11 a.m. on 1st June 1972) the Ambassador contacted the Secretary of the follow-up committee and informed him that the efforts he had made to convince Stockwell had been in vain.

This was as far as the calculations of the companies and the imperialist powers were concerned. At the same time and despite the mobilisation measures which we undertook to escalate the situation between 17th May and 1st June, no slogans were issued in Iraq or abroad which went beyond the general slogans making the irreversible demand for the wresting of our legitimate rights from the companies. No one, not even any sincere supporter, mentioned the nationalisation slogan. Indeed, at that time we heard some

advice to wait and not to be hasty in taking extreme decisions. We were offered suggestions of a middle-of-the-road character to deal with the problem. Outside the leadership of the Party and the Revolution there were many, including high Government officials, who imagined up to the last moments prior to the decision that the toughest resolution that might be adopted would not exceed unilateral legislation imposing partial national sovereignty over the companies. This was further evidence of the psychological condition created by the companies, putting many people in a state of bewilderment and fear to the extent that they imagined all kinds of measures but never the decisive blow of nationalisation.

But now the talk about nationalisation has become so familiar because the experiment was successfully accomplished and carried out and because the one who jumped into the river managed to swim quite skilfully to reach the other bank in safety.

Question: How did the battle proceed between the Decree of 1st June and the victory of 1st March? I do not mean the well-known general factors, but those of a special nature which are probably unknown to the public.

Answer: As was mentioned in the question, the general factors are well known, but there is no harm in confirming them here. There was the determination of the leadership of the Party and the Revolution, their decision against any retreat and their conscious persistence in following the path of unconventional calculations. There was also the support of the people for the historic resolution and their generous sacrifices as well as the solidarity of the national forces in the country, together with public enthusiasm which swept the Arab homeland and created an atmosphere of support

which greatly benefited us, particularly in the first stages before the violations by some parties. There was also international support from the noble and progressive forces and organisations as well as from the socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union, which was the first to buy our nationalised oil.

Besides all these general factors, there were others of a decisive nature, that is the detailed and general day-to-day management of affairs connected with the Nationalisation Decree. Some might imagine that the political leadership issued the Decree of 1st June and left the technical departments to direct matters. In fact, what took place was completely different. Without underestimating the importance of the technical departments and the role they played, as well as the great efforts exerted by them in preparing many of the details connected with the 1st of June Decree and the march that led to the final victory, the helm remained in the hands of the political leadership. Moreover, there were comrades in the leadership and in the senior cadre of the Party who conducted these day-to-day affairs. They did not simply supervise the formulas that had been drafted, but they also carried them out.

The management of the affairs of the battle of nationalisation in this way preserved the revolutionary political content of the nationalisation operation and insured, at the same time, the greatest degree of efficiency for the success of the operation. This situation is still the same today. Throughout those days, every drop of oil was looked at in a political context as part of the strategic plans of the Party and the Revolution, with full appreciation of the economic aspect.

We are not divulging any secret if we say that the total amount of oil which we marketed before the 1st of March was 48 million tons out of 57 million tons (the maximum

production of the Kirkuk oilfield). These 48 million tons were 20 million tons more than the amount which the companies had insisted was the maximum they could market — that is 28 million tons, and this was their justification for reducing production in the period prior to nationalisation. After nationalisation, oil was exported to the following countries: France, the Soviet Union, Spain, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Egypt, Morocco and also to some independent western companies.

Question: What about the Basrah Petroleum Company and future relations with it?

Answer: Among the calculations made by the leadership in conducting the battle of Nationalisation was to wield a hammer with which it could threaten the companies if they went so far in challenging the Nationalisation Decree as to use the force of the imperialist powers on the high seas to prevent the marketing of the nationalised oil. This hammer would then have fallen upon them once more.

As for relations with the Basrah Petroleum Company, it is well known that we have no objection at all to dealing with any party or company on a commercial basis that does not conflict with our sovereignty and interests and would not be contradictory to our strategy on the national and regional levels. Before the 1st June, the situation was different. Foreign companies were an element which interfered with and threatened our sovereignty, and played at will with our country's affairs. After the 1st June, the situation changed radically. The helm is now in our hands, but we would like to give a warning that if any situation arises in the future in which our national sovereignty and interests are contradicted, such a contradiction could only

be resolved in favour of our sovereignty and our national interests.

Question: What about the situation after the victory of the 1st March, now that a year has passed since the historic achievement of Nationalisation?

Answer: After the 1st March, we in the Party stressed the necessity of avoiding a mistake committed previously by other leaders, regimes and political parties. Victory may lead to conceit and an inability to see clearly at a time when victory demands from revolutionaries humility, the maintenance of balance, penetrating insight and the ability to apply the most accurate standards in leading the march of the future. Any victory must be measured in relation to the Arab revolution. Any victory achieved within one Arab country is but a step along the road to the central aims of the Arab revolution. This means that we must maintain our revolutionary vision and stamina. We endeavoured to stress this point in the internal education of the Party and in the education of the people. We have warned also against slipping into any slackening of efforts and a stage of indifference after achieving the victory of the 1st March. The spirit of sacrifice and the degree of vigilance instilled by the 1st of June Decree must be maintained in the face of the plots of imperialism, reaction and monopolies. Self-confidence is an essential element for leadership, fighters and the masses, but this confidence must not be dissipated by vanity which causes leaderships, fighters and the masses to lose the ability to make the most accurate calculations needed to face up to the possibilities of the future and emergencies.

The Kurdish Question 1: The Heart of the Matter

The following is an address given at the end of the third session of the discussion on the Draft Law for the Autonomy of the Iraqi Kurds, which was held at the Iraqi National Assembly on 24th September 1973. The meeting was attended by more than two hundred prominent non-party figures at the invitation of the Regional Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. The Ba'th has a Pan-Arab Command representing the Arab nation as a whole, with representatives from various countries; it is the highest leadership of the Party. The Regional Command (*al-qiyada al-qutriya*) represents the individual country and deals with its particular issues.

The national aspirations of the Iraqi Kurds have been an issue which was discussed repeatedly by the Kurds and the various administrations since 1961, when Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani, head of the Barzani tribe and one of the leaders of the Kurdish movement at the time, differed with Abd al-Karim Kassem. Fighting erupted between the two sides and continued sporadically despite the attemps made by the various governments.

When the Ba'th Party returned to office in 1968, they came this time with a definite idea on the question of nationalist aspirations based on autonomy. With the new spirit, negotiations were held between the government and the Kurdish leadership which resulted in the Proclamation of 11th March 1970. It provided for Kurdish autonomy within the framework of the national unity of Iraq, to be achieved over a period of four years.

The National Front, composed of the Ba'th Party, the Communist Party, and independent personalities, worked on the draft Autonomy Law, which was then debated by the various interests and communities. The law was eventually proclaimed on 11th March 1974. However, the Barzani leadership rebelled, and with

foreign support took up arms against the government. The five Kurdish ministers resigned and were replaced by others, opposed to Barzani. More recently the US House of Representatives Intelligence Committee revealed in its report of February 1976 that the insurrection was instigated and nourished by the USA "to sap the resources" of Iraq. On 25th March 1974 the Legislative Council for the Autonomous Region was formed and its first meeting was held on 5th October 1974. The meeting elected members of the Executive Council of the autonomous region.

Brothers,

In the name of the Regional Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and in the name of the Revolution Command Council I thank those who have attended these meetings and who have undoubtedly made considerable contributions with their remarks and speeches. Such contributions will have no small part in the review of the Draft Law discussed in these meetings.

We stated at the outset that we did not intend, neither do we intend now, to make such meetings a matter of mere formality. We actually intend to make them a field for the interaction of views so that they may enable us to render the best service to our people, inspired by our firm belief that national responsibility and service to the people are not confined to the political parties and organised national movement only. They also stem from enabling a wide public, independent patriots, progressive nationalists and democrats to express the interest of the people. I would like to point briefly to the fact that the law and the constitution are man-made and evolve in accordance with the needs of the people. They develop with the development of the revolution through its various phases. What is now regarded in its present form as the best — and I refer here to the constitution — may become liable for reconsideration.

But what we always care for, as I have mentioned earlier, is that the constitution should be amended in the same way as it was formulated; that is, we should resort to legitimate means in reviewing the constitution and use legitimate means in reviewing the laws.

The matter we are now discussing, the Draft for the Autonomy of Kurdistan, is not, after all, everything, despite the importance of the text and the need for accuracy to avoid any misinterpretation which may lead to conflict. The issue in the first place is linked with present and long-term intentions. It is also concerned with the satisfaction which may be felt by the Arabs, the Kurds and the responsible constitutional bodies with the terms of the Draft. Otherwise a text might be agreed today, only to be rejected the following day. Thus the same authority, organisation or constitutional body which approves the law of autonomy today as a chapter in the constitution or as a separate law could abrogate it in the same manner in the future in either case.

The matter of basic importance is the extent of our belief in the text which we agree as a people, first and foremost and before anything else, and then as national institutions linked with the people and as constitutional institutions linked with the state. The method of formulating the text is important for the consolidation of the side supporting the text and the prevention of any risk of its terms being jeopardized. When a resolution is formulated by the opinions of a handful of Iraqi citizens whatever their responsibilities in the state, it will normally be possible, psychologically and practically, to change the text by using much easier methods and means than if the text is formulated by the method we are referring to, when it is also discussed with the other national political parties before it is submitted to the people and then to the responsible constitutional bodies in its final form.

The other aspect which I would like to talk about is that we should not fall into the error of certain concepts and lose sight of the dividing line between our Kurdish people and the Kurdish Democratic Party to such an extent that we imagine that they are one and the same. Neither should we commit the mistake of imagining that the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and the national Government and its constitutional institutions are one party to the dispute and that there is another party confronting them, which is our Kurdish people. This is wrong. The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party considers itself, on both ideological and practical levels, a leader of the Iraqi people as a whole, and not a leader of the Arabs only among the Iraqis. Our discussion here is concerned with the country as a whole — no less and no more.

Moreover, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party is the leader of the political administration. This political administration does not consider itself, through its constitutional institutions, an administration for the Arabs only; it considers itself an administration representing the will of the Arabs as well as the Kurds: that is, the will of the whole Iraqi people, Arabs, Kurds and minorities. This is why it is unacceptable to consider the national Government to be in conflict and our Kurdish people as the other party in this conflict.

The third point is that the Autonomy Draft Law, although appearing in its legal framework as a formulation of the rights of our Kurdish people, is in its ideological and historical perspective a matter affecting all the Iraqi people: Arabs, Kurds and minorities. Whatever attempts are made to choose the best legal and constitutional formulas for autonomy, the essential and basic point remains, as the question is put by some of our brothers: what would the solution be if the wills of the Ba'th party and the Kurdish Democratic Party differed over the formula?

The solution lies in going to the heart of the matter, and

the heart of the matter is that there is an Iraqi people, which is our people. It is composed of two principal nationalities — the Arab and the Kurdish — and of other fraternal minorities. From the ideological standpoint the essence of affirming this is to recognise the fact ideologically, psychologically, legally and constitutionally, and to act accordingly. The last important point concerning this matter is that the Arab should show in his attitude towards the rights we are discussing the same enthusiasm and conviction as a Kurd of similar social, political and mental standard. Fanaticism should be confronted with broad-mindedness, sectarianism with national unity, and elements aiming to upset the balance of the national government, with self-control. This is the bearing that will lead the ship which we have to steer towards a safe shore. There is no other way than this.

There is another point in comment on what was said regarding Allende's experience.[1] We say quite confidently that the "anti-Allende" would be buried here, in Iraq. Allende's experience would not be repeated with us in words or in deeds. If we discover that the laws which protect the people and their future, and the laws which safeguard the state and its security are no longer adequate, through our faith in our people and our self-confidence we shall enact new laws that will protect the people and their future, and the state and its security.

However, our self-confidence will not develop into arrogance which will blind us to the reality of the actions of imperialism and its agents in the region. It will not lead us to the point where we no longer subject our affairs to close

[1] The overthrow of the Allende government of Chile on 11th September 1973 also had repercussions in Iraq, as some of the public feared that the Iraqi Revolution might suffer the same fate.

scrutiny and assess our own capacities and the estimated reserves both on our side and on that of the enemy.

This is a valuable opportunity to speak about some of our conceptions. We know that this country was the target of imperialist forces. We know that throughout all stages beginning from 17/30 July 1968, the Revolution has closely followed the developments engineered by the forces opposed to the Revolution and its concepts, in Iraqi society and the Iraqi state and in the relationships between the national forces.

We know that as each stage has its own methods of action from the revolutionary's viewpoint so it has its own methods from the viewpoint of the counter-revolutionary forces. Moreover, we should not overlook the fact that the imperialists and their hostile forces tried to revise all their old plans and methods, and to replace the conventional reserves which they used to throw into battle with their concealed reserves, their precious reserves according to their plans and conceptions. This was particularly the case after the nationalisation of the oil industry and the emergence of a policy which expressed in explosive terms the essence of the Revolution in 1972. Imperialism does not resort to its concealed reserves unless it loses the ability to achieve its aims through the use of its conventional reserves with which it combats revolutions in the Third World.

We know that imperialism realised finally and particularly in 1972 that the Revolution in Iraq had gone past the state of the "permitted revolution" which it was accustomed to see in the countries of the Third World, or at least in most of them, and especially in the Arab region. We also know that imperialism and its agents calculated that the principles which the Revolution is applying and the forms it is creating will eradicate imperialist interests in the region and kindle fires all around Iraq to the detriment

of their essential interests, and particularly their oil interests.

We have objective evidence that imperialism was surprised by the many fundamental methods of the policy followed in this country. It had previously been surprised by several earlier experiences. Here we recall the experiment of Cuba. If imperialism had imagined that the Cuban experiment would have developed to the stage it has reached today, it would have made earlier use of the concealed reserves and struck at the root of the revolution in Cuba. It was under the impression that the reserve forces, the conventional reserves it had, were capable of defeating the revolution in its early phase and so preventing it from developing along the planned course. When control slipped out of its hands, it looked for concealed reserves, but in vain. The backbone of the revolution had stiffened. However hard imperialism may now look for its concealed reserves it will never be able to compel our Revolution to retreat and collapse, nor will it be capable of destroying the Revolution. Some people may imagine that the Revolution is unaware of what is happening around it. The Revolution has its eyes wide open. Throughout all its stages, the Revolution will remain capable of performing its role courageously and precisely and without hesitation or panic, once it takes action to crush the pockets of the counter-revolution. All that we hear and read about, including those crimes which have taken place recently, are new devices to confront the Revolution and exhaust it psychologically. These are not sadistic crimes as some imagine; they are crimes committed by traitorous agents.

Those who have sold themselves to the foreigner will not escape punishment. I cannot recall that the Revolution made any promises which it subsequently betrayed. I confidently emphasise that those responsible for these crimes

will be unmasked and severely punished. Those who are committing these deeds are individuals who have been hired and exploited in certain ways in the midst of the difficult phase through which we are passing. However, it is not enough to speak loosely about our forces, capabilities and concepts, or about imperialism. We must know, learn, and accurately monitor the movements of imperialism. We must calculate with foresight the probable developments of its plans, forces and reserves both inside and outside our frontiers. We must be prepared. The plans, concepts, views, internal forces and reserves we used up to the 1st March 1973, the day on which the monopolistic companies knelt down and recognised our nationalisation, are no longer enough to confront imperialism with its newly conceived and developed plans. We know on this basis that when imperialism was surprised by the revolutionary moves and measures of 1972, it re-examined the situation in order to launch a counter-attack. Thus we prepared additional forces for which imperialism had not allowed in its plans. We can assure our patriotic brothers, both here in this spot and throughout Iraq, that it will be the "anti-Allende" that will be buried in Iraq, and they will not make an Allende of us as they did in the experiment of Chile.

However hard imperialism may try to conjure up for its agents and those who have stopped half way on the road to revolution a picture of us as in a state of weakness, we want to say to them, to those who are under the impression that it was Nazim Kazzar[1] who protected the revolution and that his departure would open up wide opportunities for

[1] Nazim Kazzar was the former Director of Internal Security who tried to carry out a coup against the regime on 30th June, and failed. The plot caused a certain wave of apprehension among the people of Iraq, especially after the occurrence of a series of mysterious crimes committed against some ordinary peaceable families in Baghdad.

them to play havoc with the security of the country, we tell these people to continue in this impression. We won't be depressed at all if they want to dream, but their dreams will never "make them touch the forehead of the sun". We are confident that it is the dreams of the people, of the noble people, which would finally be realised, and not the dreams of the treacherous agents.

Thank you very much.

The Kurdish Question 2: One People

This speech was delivered at the National Assembly Building in Baghdad on 17th October 1973 at a meeting arranged by the Ba'th Party Regional Command to discuss the draft Autonomy Law for Iraqi Kurdish region, and attended by many independent Kurdish personalities.

Brothers,

On behalf of the Regional Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, I welcome our brothers who responded to the invitation and attended this meeting. It was expected that I should give you an opportunity to examine the Autonomy Draft before speaking to you, but I considered it useful to precede the discussion with some brief remarks.

I should like to repeat something which has been said more than once before. It is that we intend at such gatherings to enrich the proposals at hand. We don't want formal meetings. We don't ask for anyone's support, but we hope to find such support for the cause of right. In our view, this is legitimate, especially as the demand for this support is emanating from our people, to whom we belong and who belong to us.

At a meeting like this, we don't want to hear that there are supporters of Government and the Ba'th Party. This is a matter which lies outside the range of such gatherings. It is the general policy and the extent of support it receives from the people, whether in regard to its final outcome or its details, which decides where the Government stands and what place the Ba'th Party holds in the minds and hearts of the Iraqi Arabs, Kurds and minorities. We have believed for a long time in the idea which we have stressed at other

meetings similar to this — the idea that no man is free from natural errors of judgement. There is nothing made by man which is absolutely perfect. Man-made matters, whether in the form of legislation or decrees, always reflect the views of their makers. They express their attitudes on a certain issue within a certain social phase and no other. As the opinions of society on the details of political matters are not necessarily identical at all times, it has become natural to consult the other sons of the people on any question which can be submitted for discussion, and especially on any question relating to the destiny of the country, such as the one we are just about to discuss. How can we realise democracy when we are speaking of democracy for the people? How can we convey our decisions affecting our destiny when they have matured? It can be done by consultation, by submitting such questions to public opinion, for discussion in the media of the press. It can also be done by debating them in an assembly of the representatives of the people, which we have not yet formed, although we are about to prepare for it. It is natural, therefore, to look for the best means of developing the thoughts of the sons of the people. We prefer to see this achieved by ascertaining the opinions of everybody, or, more correctly, the opinions which represent the overwhelming majority of the sons of the people, whether Arabs, Kurds or ethnic minorities, on proposals such as the one for (Kurdish) autonomy we are going to discuss.

We do not intend at this meeting to secure the support of some brothers of one particular party and not of the other, nor do we seek to isolate any faction, party or persons and prevent them from conveying their opinions to the circles they want to brief. You know that brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party have already submitted a draft, but we have not discussed it. The fact is that in our opinion their

draft is far removed from the concept of autonomy. It is imperative that we should discuss the draft in the spirit of one people. The Arab must do his best to represent the Kurdish point of view as belonging to the Iraqi people and the Iraqi homeland and also in regard to the question of autonomy. The Kurd must also represent his Arab brother in all such matters.

This is the spirit, brothers, which makes us one people and enables us to confront imperialism and its plans with resolution and deprive it of the opportunity to exploit any breaches through which it can penetrate and try to achieve casual advantages to the detriment of the general march which we mean to consolidate.

If we intended to be self-centred in discussing the Autonomy Draft with the Arab nationalists and progressives and independent Arabs we would not have entered the discussions with them at all. Had it been our desire to isolate a particular faction we would have discussed this draft with you alone as independent and progressive Kurdish patriots. But we have been concerned with discussing this draft with the (political) parties and with the Arab and Kurdish nationalists and progressives for the political and psychological reason that we do not look on this Draft as a final formula for the autonomy of our Kurdish people within the Iraqi Republic. If we looked on this draft as being in its final form you would have heard of it from the television and radio. In addition to all this, we do not consider it a sound approach to bring people to account because of their opinions. I should tell the gentlemen present that we welcome any opinion whether it is labelled extremist or moderate. We shall not indulge ourselves in looking for those opinions which correspond with ours or diverge from them. We are looking for the truth, and the truth may not necessarily be found in its entirety and in all

its details in the proposal we are submitting. It is the truth that we are after and it is this that we are going to discuss with you and with the rest of our brothers so that we may arrive at it. In reality, the results of our previous discussions have immensely benefited us on this subject, whether in regard to the basic and secondary matters or in regard to the legal framework.

I beg of you to discuss the proposal freely and choose the way which expresses your opinions, regardless of any considerations which you may have of the amount of divergence or identity between your opinion and the opinion of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party.

Yet we hope at the same time, and we are sure of it, that you will take into account in your discussions of this Draft the extent of divergence or identity between your opinions and your own Iraqi national conscience, and the future of this country, in which Arabs, Kurds and other ethnic groups are all included as brothers.

Our main purpose is to find how to build the future of Iraq and what principles we can establish for the relationship between Arabs and Kurds, how the Arabs are related to the society in which they live and the state to which they belong, and how the Kurdish citizen of our people is related to the state to which he belongs. We should like to discuss this Draft in this spirit and hope to arrive in this way at the truth, not only in its general outlines but also in its details.

In the beginning we thought that our Draft was the best formula, but we do not think so now in regard to its details, since the discussions which we held with brothers of yours exposed certain gaps in some of the articles. You will see after the discussions have ended that this Draft will emerge in a different form from the one which you have read. There is no better evidence of our respect for the opinions of our brothers who are exerting true patriotic efforts than the fact

that we are taking into consideration the gaps which they discover for us and giving practical expression to their sound observations.

I should like, in conclusion, to point out once more that this Draft will be submitted after the end of the discussions to the Command of the National Front, as we have already explained. The Draft of the Front will then be submitted to the Kurdish Democratic Party so that they may discuss it in a comradely and fraternal spirit.

Brothers, we have not prejudged anybody. We do not intend to isolate any group, faction or party. We find ourselves in need of even the unweaned baby among the sons of this homeland. We are therefore even more in need of all patriotic parties and all the well-intentioned individual patriots who have in time become intellectual or political leaders in this homeland. When we say we are in need of even the unweaned baby in this homeland we are not speaking out of weakness, but rather out of regard to our high aims as Iraqis and as strugglers in the great Arab homeland which demands of us high ideals and objectives as well as great effort. This is why we need everyone in this society. This is an ideological need and not a temporary expedient.

I hope that the discussions will give an opportunity to the majority of our brothers to express their opinions and, if you find this convenient, they will deal with the Draft item by item together with the selection of alternatives. For example, it may be said that on such and such subject or such and such article or paragraph there is the following objection. As far as the political aspect is concerned, the aspect of pure ideas, we do not believe that we are far from each other in regard to basic ideological matters. This stems from our affirmation that each one of us needs to change his angle of vision, that is not to consider himself as a Kurd only or an Arab only, but as an Iraqi with Kurdish

nationality or an Iraqi with Arab nationality. I do not believe that we differ in our attitude to this Draft, which although called "Autonomy Draft for our Kurdish People", might essentially be given the name of Autonomy Draft for the Iraqi people, Arabs, Kurds and minorities. I believe that unless we start from this point we shall be giving the imperialists an opportunity to exploit sectarian differences, debilitate our people and make it easy for themselves to implement their plots through which they are waiting for an opportunity to destroy the ambitions of our people.

Thank you.

The Kurdish Question 3: The Autonomy Law

This speech was delivered on 11th March 1974 in Khuld Hall in Baghdad to a group of prominent non-party figures convened by the Progressive National Front. Saddam Hussein describes the course of negotiations with the leaders of the Kurdish Democratic Party at that time and then answers questions from the audience.

Brothers,

We are meeting today to give you a direct explanation of the developments of the dialogue conducted by the High Committee of the Progressive National Front with the Kurdish Democratic Party and those concerned in its leadership. The text of the Autonomy Law for our Kurdish people in the area of Kurdistan will be broadcast in a few hours' time.

This is not meant to reduce the importance of the direct dialogue with you. However, a number of meetings have been held to discuss a draft proposal for the autonomy of the area of Kurdistan. In the copies distributed to you, you will find clear evidence of the opinions which you kindly offered at the time.

Before talking about the dialogue, it is necessary to say a few words, if only in haste, about the birth of the 11th of March Proclamation itself. After four years of work on drafting the Autonomy Law which is the basic essence of the 11th of March Proclamation, it is imperative that we get to know how the Proclamation was born.

You are all aware of the state of Iraqi society as it existed in 1970: the political currents and the negative inheritance of the past with regard to relationships between the political

and national movements and also the relationship between the Ba'th Arab Socialist Party and the Kurdish Democratic Party, with all its negative aspects. You will know that the leading party, the Ba'th Arab Socialist Party, was not fully capable in 1970 of playing its leading role in the armed forces. There were elements at the level of command in the armed forces who did not believe in the essence of the Proclamation made on 11th of March 1970. Those elements — and they were not few in number — considered that the issue of such a proclamation amounted to putting them under pressure and depriving them of any means of self-defence on account of the circumstances which had prevailed prior to 11th of March in current relationships and Iraqi society as a whole. Iraqi society itself did not entirely believe in the Proclamation of 11th of March. Therefore the leading Ba'th Party undertook at that time a different struggle within itself and within our society in order to bring the Proclamation of 11th of March 1970 to birth.

In relation to the consolidation of the position of the leading Party at that time, the issue of the Proclamation was considered an extraordinary adventure by conventional calculations and in view of the connection between such matters and the circumstances we have just mentioned.

Prior to this, contacts had been made with the Kurdish Democratic Party, and the representative of the Party at that time had made certain suggestions for the end of the armed conflict. The essence of his suggestions was that the economic blockade imposed on the Kurdish fighters at that time should be lifted. He was Mr Dara Tawfiq, and we told him in explicit terms that those were not the aims for which the Kurds were fighting. If there was a genuine desire to build up a new democratic relationship within Iraqi society and repair the damage which affected this society, we

should have had before us the proposals related to the final destination of the aspirations for which you were struggling.

The same words were also exchanged with Mr Aziz Sharif during the first journey which he made to the northern area. The dialogue was then developed to make the Proclamation of 11th of March the essential expression of the good intentions of the Iraqi people and their national and political forces.

As we meet in this hall today, four years have passed since the issue of the Proclamation of 11th of March 1970. The last four years, full of the achievements which are known to you, have had a passage strewn with thorns, particularly in regard to the relationship with the Kurdish Democratic Party and the unusual circumstances, indeed the exceptional circumstances, which have prevailed over the northern area of our dear homeland.

There are many parts in the northern area where neither the authority of the state nor its laws played any fundamental role in shaping the social relationships. I don't think that there is anyone in the Iraqi society who is not aware of this fact.

On the basis of the rationale which I have briefly outlined, we refused then to make the Proclamation of 11th of March anything more than a developed sequel to the Proclamation of 29th of June which was made during the government of Bazzaz and brought the fighting to an end at that time. In our judgement we relied on our view of future events, the ideas which we believe in and the principles which we consider suitable in building the Iraqi society for which we are struggling.

It is natural, therefore, to consider the Proclamation of 11th of March as marking the end of all the negative and exceptional features which had prevailed to that date.

Yet the Proclamation of 11th of March was and will

remain adquate for building the national relationships which the Iraqis deem conducive to their ultimate interests, and in which we and all the political forces believe.

You know that in previous discussion in the National Assembly, we rejected the idea of debating the 11th of March Proclamation, that is discussing its principles, when it was suggested by one of our brothers. Is the 11th of March Proclamation necessary, he asked? Is it necessary to set up an autonomous area or should we allow the opportunities to materialise on the basis of Iraqi laws and the principles upheld by the system or the National Front, within the framework of a single Iraqi Society? An answer was given to this brother in the following words: We have come here to discuss this matter on the basis of a belief in the realisation and implementation of autonomy for our Kurdish people.

In the light of the same concepts we meet in this hall as representatives of the High Committee of the Progressive National Front so that we may explain to you the developments of the dialogue about the Autonomy Law Draft. These began with a working paper proposed by the Regional Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and ended in the form of a law approved today, 11th of March 1974. An opportunity was given to all the political forces and individual citizens who are not affiliated to any party to discuss the working paper. The opinions expressed at that time were discussed with all objectivity because of the good intentions we feel towards the ideas and opinions expressed by all the patriots of Iraq, whether members of the policital parties or citizens who are unaffiliated to any political party.

Various ideas were put forward during the dialogue with the Kurdish Democratic Party. When embarrassed about their opinions, our brothers used sometimes to say that the

11th of March Proclamation was issued on 11th of March 1970 and that there had been a long interval between 11th of March 1970 and the discussions which we were holding then on the Autonomy Draft. Society evolves and ideas evolve.

This last point is correct. Ideas evolve and society evolves, but does the first of what was said imply that evolution means abandonment of true obligations? This was the question with which the responsible leaders of the Kurdish Democratic Party were confronted during our discussions with them.

We appreciate that evolution takes place and we believe in any evolution which moves us forward. But we cannot in any circumstances consider or believe in making the word "evolution" and the concept of evolution a cover for shirking true obligations, especially when we are concerned with the relationship within one people and in matters of destiny such as the question we are discussing now.

In harmony with the concept of evolution, we ask our brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party: "Can we allow an element, individual or persons in Iraqi society to put to us the following question: "Why the Proclamation of 11th March and why autonomy?" In other words, can we allow, along with this attitude, a trend to emerge in Iraq which leads to asking for the abrogation of the Proclamation of 11th March and the cancellation of the Autonomy Draft?"

This does not imply that we believe in the emergence of such a trend or will allow it to emerge. We do not intend by these words to suppress unjustifiably the ideas which contradict our own, but we believe that the will of the Iraqis has approved this Draft Law since 11th March 1970. The Iraqi people implicitly expressed their opinion of the Proclamation in the form of celebrations and demonstrations of joy at that time. We consider any opinion outside the

framework of the concepts of the 11th of March Proclamation as dangerous to Iraqi society and the future of Iraq.

For this reason we do not accept or allow the contrary opinions which argue that there is no need for the 11th March Proclamation and no need to implement the Autonomy Law in regard to our Kurdish people in the area of Kurdistan.

The dialogue was long and practical. It started on 16th January 1974, but this was not the real beginning of the dialogue. The dialogue about the 11th March Proclamation, the implementation of the Proclamation and the essence of the Proclamation — autonomy — has been a continuous process since 11th March 1970 until this morning. As we shall explain, the essence of the dialogue concentrated on the basic principles which govern the concept of autonomy. Although the dialogue has not been as explicit and direct as the question of the form which I have just given it, the essence of the dialogue was, in fact, based on this form during the submission of proposals and counter-proposals.

To explain some of the differences in opinion we give you samples of that dialogue. I have just mentioned that this dialogue was held with some of our brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party. To put it on record, the speaker was Muhammad Mahmud Abd al-Rahman and the meeting was held at the National Assembly on the date mentioned before. Those present included Mr Habib Muhammad Karim, Secretary General of the Kurdish Democratic Party, together with other representatives from the same party. For the National Front there were myself and the brother Mr Mukarram al-Talabani, and a number of other brothers from the Ba'th Arab Socialist Party and the Iraqi Communist Party. There were also some patriots, nationalists and progressive people including Mr Hisham al-Shawi and Mr Abd al-Latif al-Shawwaf. Independent

Kurds included Mr Ihsan Shirzad, Mr Fuad Arif and others.

One of the points put forward for discussion was that the circumstances had changed and a long time had passed between the issue of the Proclamation of 11th March 1970 and the discussions of the Autonomy Law. It was said that if any ideas were submitted by the Kurdish Democratic Party and found incompatible with the terms and provisions of the 11th March Proclamation such ideas should be treated in this context. Our brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party were answered by the assertion that we were debating matters submitted in accordance with the terms and concepts of the 11th March Proclamation and that the discussions thereon should be confined to these concepts. The terms of the Proclamation were not open to any individual interpretation.

In the opening remarks which Mr Habib Muhammad Karim delivered to the meeting, he said that many people had found their way into the United Nations Organisation. He was told that we were debating the fate of one people and not other peoples represented in the United Nations. We were debating a draft for autonomy and not a draft for a new state in Iraq. He apologised and explained that he did not mean such ideas. Yet, according to our own belief, he did have something of such ideas in his mind at that time.

The Draft of the National Front was delivered to the Kurdish Democratic Party on 12th December 1973 and the first meeting between the representatives of the National Front and the representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party was held on 16th January 1974. The discussions continued up to the last meeting, which was an extended meeting including all representatives. This extended meeting was scheduled for 2nd March 1974 but we were surprised by the absence of the representatives of the Kurdish

Democratic Party. The National Front decided to issue the Autonomy Law at the appointed time despite the disagreement with the Kurdish Democratic Party and this party's lack of any desire to make its will part of the collective will of the national parties and national forces in declaring the Autonomy Draft as a law issued at the appointed time.

Every one of you now has a copy of this Law and you must have already acquainted yourself with it. In our judgement, and according to our interpretation, this is the basic essence of the 11th March Proclamation issued in 1970. It is the embodiment of self-rule as we see it and understand it, bearing in mind the particular attributes of our people and their special circumstances and, at the same time, the immense benefits gained from the experiences of other peoples.

The discussion then moved to the demarcation of the administrative borders of the autonomy region. We told them that we understand that the demarcation of the administrative borders of the autonomy region must be carried out according to the following principles. The fundamental principle in the delineation of the region is that its administrative borders should be fixed on the basis of national entity and the population density of the nationality granted the right of autonomy, provided that the area remains part of the state and the territory of the country and subject to the state's full sovereignty. We also understand that the demarcation of the administrative borders must not be based on an absolute separation, in the sense of segregation, that is segregating all Kurds, removing them from the society of Iraq, putting them on a certain piece of land, surrounding them with a fence and prohibiting them from moving outside this area. We cannot accept an autonomy which means segregating non-Kurdish Iraqis from the region of autonomy in an absolute manner and in

accordance with the concepts I have just mentioned. Our understanding of autonomy is on the basis of free mixing of people and of specifying an area where national rights may be exercised within Iraq and the sovereignty of Iraq in present and future terms. In addition, and in accordance with the foregoing principle, we understand that it is impossible to follow up the shadow of every citizen belonging to the nationality covered by autonomy so that we may trace this shadow and treat it as a fixed spot of land belonging to the autonomy region. In order to appreciate this concept clearly, we consider the facts of our existence as we are discussing it in this hall: the Iraqis are composed of two main nationalities and some minorities.

This is the society of Iraq. The Iraqi Arab citizen is to be found in Kerbala, and in Erbil; there is a Kurdish Iraqi citizen in Kirkuk, and a Kurdish Iraqi citizen in Basrah. Perhaps the total number of Kurdish citizens spread all over Iraq outside the autonomy region is more than the total of Kurdish citizens living in any other mixed area. Is it possible to understand autonomy in the sense of following up the shadow of every citizen belonging to the nationality covered by the autonomy measures and demarcating the administrative areas on that basis? If we adopted this concept it would be impossible for us to delineate the administrative borders of the autonomy region at all.

Such was the main point on which we based our concepts when discussing the subject of the demarcation of the administrative borders for the autonomy region. Whenever our brothers found themselves in difficulties they invoked history. They said that historically there were Kurds in such and such area, and in this and that area the Kurds were living. We argued against such reasoning and said that it was possible to refer to history but not for the purpose of the demarcation of the autonomy region. In one society and

one state the weight of the population density of the nationality receiving autonomy should be the guiding rule even if this nationality did not exist previously where it does now, but was known to exist in some other places where it doesn't exist today.

Based on the considerations of history, ancient history, and international axioms, the logic of following up a citizen with his shadow for the purpose of the demarcation of the political frontiers of any state has been discounted by international conventions. For example, the Arabs cannot ask for Spain just because they were there some time in the past nor can they ask for any other area outside the frontiers of the Arab homeland.

More important than all this, we have to discuss the matter fundamentally within a logical framework which preserves our unity, protects our future, spreads love among the people, cultivates confidence and unites our hopes, not on the basis of present-day calculations only but also on the basis of calculations for the future.

Our brothers then submitted a proposal providing for a division of the revenue of Iraq according to the ratio of population, and the allocation of the autonomy budget on that basis. In reply our brothers, the representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party, were told quietly and with ample affection that this logic raised the following objections.

This is not the logic of autonomy nor is it the logic of one people. It would be conceivable in the case of confederation, for example, but is not suitable for autonomy. Leaving the issue of autonomy aside, this kind of logic is also unsuitable for a unified people.

If you accept the fact of one people, is it possible to give the Governorate of Imara a share of the revenue of Iraq in proportion to the ratio of the population in Imara? How can we build up a well-balanced economy based on

centralised indicators and present and future calculations if we act on this basis?

We are concerned with the phenomenon of backwardness within Iraqi society wherever it may be and whatever area it may affect, and give it exceptional attention, but we cannot distribute the revenue of the country on the basis of population ratios. In truth, it is known that there is a budget for the state and an investment programme. At the same time there are special allocations to deal with backwardness in the region of Kurdistan. This is legitimate and we believe in it as our duty towards the Iraqi people and with a high sense of responsibility towards our people in the region of Kurdistan. We are introducing a special chapter in the next five-year plan. This chapter will deal with backwardness in the region of Kurdistan. This is right and we shall work towards this end.

These discussions were interrupted on 2nd March 1974 as mentioned. Efforts continued, the efforts of people of good will, until they led to the visit of Mr Idris Barzani to Baghdad. Last Friday we had a meeting with our brother Idris which was brief in view of the limited time available. We had less than four days only left at our disposal. We were determined to proclaim the Autonomy Draft at its appointed time, that is today. Our determination was in accordance with the resolutions of the Regional Congress of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and the decisions of the Progressive National Front. As we are dealing with this subject there may be somebody who will put the following question: Why all this determination and what happens if autonomy is proclaimed after two months, for example?

We deal with this question also in this way: the determination to implement the Autonomy Law by the latest date, which is 11th March 1974, is not a matter of for-

mality. It is an essential matter according to our calculations. This people (the Kurdish) has become accustomed to many negative features in its relationship with the regimes which preceded us over a long period of time. For a long time this people has become accustomed to hear from the rulers promises which were never fulfilled. The precise fulfilment of promises has therefore become one of the most important requirements for the restoration of self-confidence and mutual trust between the leader or ruler and the people.

Our Kurdish people are more in need than the rest of the people of Iraq of the coming into force of the Autonomy Law by this date and no later, because they have been hearing since 11th March 1970 suspicious stories from many quarters and cliques at home and abroad raising doubts about the intentions of the Government and the National Front in enforcing the Autonomy Law in the area of Kurdistan. Therefore, in view of these calculations the insistence on issuing the Autonomy Law at the appointed time is an essential matter and not a formal matter.

The dialogue, in fact, did not begin on 16th January 1974 as we mentioned earlier. It started on 11th March 1970 and continued to 11th March 1974.

The addition of another month could never in practice be a substitute for the four preceding years. Yet we acted with some flexibility, as we shall explain. We met our brother Idris Barzani and wanted to know what was new in the mind of the Kurdish Democratic Party. He spoke about their intention to reach an agreement with the National Front. He told us that they did not want to fight but that, on the contrary, they truly desired to find a solution. He spoke at some length and continued for almost an hour. He concentrated on the statement that the basic point for reaching an agreement was the restoration of confidence. We

answered him by saying that this was a point on which we agreed, like all the other points which we spoke about in connection with goodwill and the need for goodwill. On this we had identical views. The question was what means we could employ for the restoration of confidence. How could we restore confidence? The question of mutual trust is not a personal matter or a family affair. It is an objective matter forming part of the whole subject under discussion. Confidence is reinforced in proportion to the steps which we take forward towards each other along this road, and it is lost according to our differences. Now what are the practical steps, according to objective considerations and to the exclusion of all other factors, which may reinforce this confidence from our point of view? Confidence is reinforced by commitments and by carrying out our commitments as a National Front towards our Iraqi people as a whole and our Kurdish people in particular within the appointed time. This means by the implementation of autonomy by the last day of the specified period, namely 11th March 1974.

We told him frankly that we had heard the sort of thing he was saying from many responsible figures in the Kurdish Democratic Party, and for a very long period of time. Yet confidence continued to deteriorate; no consensus of opinion was reached and no joint proposal was developed enough to be submitted to the Iraqi people and the Kurdish people. Therefore we hoped to be presented with opinions serious, advanced and positive, both in intention and in form, to discuss seriously before 11th March 1974. He was told that our position was like this: "From now, 9th March 1974, until 12 noon on 11th March 1974 we are ready to discuss with eagerness any serious formula to uphold you as part of the national parties which will approve the Draft of Autonomy. The Draft will be promulgated in the name of all the national parties. After 12 noon on 11th March 1974

we shall not be able to discuss any formula which you submit for a joint proclamation because this will no longer be possible in practice. The Autonomy Law will be issued after 12 noon on 11th March 1974. Nevertheless, the door will remain open for fifteen more days following the Proclamation of the Autonomy Law for the area of Kurdistan during which time you can join the National Front and abide by the Autonomy Law. Until that time we shall remain under the obligation to treat you as our allies provided that no abnormal acts are committed to the detriment of law and order. If any act of this nature is committed we shall be absolved of our obligation. At the same time, we shall not seek an alternative party to take your place in this field before the expiration of the fifteen days period which I mentioned. After that we shall not accept any alliance with you." This was briefly the drift of the dialogue with the Kurdish Democratic Party and we stop here to give you the opportunity to put your questions. We shall answer whatever questions you put without any embarrassment.

Thank you.

After Comrade Saddam Hussein had concluded his accounts of the essential issues related to the Autonomy Law for the area of Kurdistan he dealt with the questions of his audience. In reply to a number of questions on how to define an ally from the viewpoint of the National Front, on the period of fifteen days given to the Kurdish Democratic Party following the promulgation of the Autonomy Law, and on the revolutionary view of the situation emerging later on if no alliance could be made with the Kurdish Democratic Party, Comrade Saddam Hussein said:

Every party, including the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, is in a minority when its organised membership is compared with the people as a whole, but sometimes it becomes a

majority. It remains a minority when it relies on the organised membership only and also when its intentions do not coincide with those of the people, but it becomes a majority when it represents the will of the people at all times in its intentions and daily actions both for the present and in the future, and identifies its actions with the aims of the people.

In Iraqi society there are parties, but all the same the majority of the members of Iraqi society do not belong to any party, that is they are not organised members of any particular party. Yet each one of the parties claims that it represents the will of the Iraqi people and carries on the struggle on this basis. Therefore, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party does not consider itself as representing the Arabs only. This is a point which is strongly held in the political and ideological calculations of the Party with all its responsibilities for its doctrines, policies and leading role in the state.

The constitution of the Party does not restrict membership of the organisation of the Party on the basis of race. All those who believe in the future of the Arabs and struggle for the Arab nation can join the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and consider themselves, as a consequence of their leading responsibility in the state, leaders not only of the Arabs but of the entire state, which is responsible for all citizens, Arabs, Kurds, and minorities.

As I am speaking on behalf of the National Front I can speak for the members of this front insofar as my information allows me. In regard to the Communist Party, the Communist Party does not believe that it represents the Arabs only. Its membership includes Arabs, Kurds and minorities, and the Party works and struggles on the basis of its doctrines and policies. Therefore, the Kurdish Democratic Party is not the only representative of the

Kurds, but it has a certain position in the matter of the representation of the Kurds. This position is of greater or lesser importance depending on the adherence of the Party to the legitimate principles for which the Kurds are struggling in the building up of Iraqi society, according to the clearly indicated objectives and the implementation of the Proclamation of 11th March 1970.

On the other hand, we do not believe that if the will of the leaders of the Kurdish Democratic Party diverges to any degree from the will of the national parties in regard to the draft or law for the autonomy of Kurdistan, this divergence should necessarily represent the will of the general membership of the Kurdish Democratic Party itself. Such are the basic principles which govern our attitudes to expectations for the future. We say clearly that up to the last day of the fifteen days' period beginning from today, the Kurdish Democratic Party will have the right to join the National Front through its present representatives. After that date new representatives may emerge to represent the Kurdish Democratic Party and join the National Front.

I hope that this statement will not be interpreted as meaning that there is a prior concealed intention to end the role of the Kurdish Democratic Party as it has been played by its appointed representatives, but we have to emphasise that the politicians responsible for the people and for our forward march must not confine their minds to one road only. In their political deliberations, they have to prepare for a number of roads in the light of probable political developments and the conclusions which may be based on them. The matter cannot be left to conventional tactical calculations. It is part of calculations of all the subsequent developments following the implementation of autonomy and the establishment of the socialist society in Iraq. We are anxious and will remain anxious until the very end of

the fifteen-day period to have the Kurdish Democratic Party, through its present representatives, take part in the march towards the building up of the new society, the society whose principal objectives have been indicated in the ideas of the Revolution of 17/30 July 1968.

We are anxious to spare our society any upheaval, even a small upheaval. We are anxious to concentrate on construction and not on quarrelling and belligerence. We are anxious to canalise the good will of all the ranks of Iraqi people, whether within the organised parties or elsewhere, to stand against the evil force which is spreading along our borders and holds positions within our own country which may be limited but are still considerable in the short and long term. We are struggling to build up a new and contented society. That is why, as we said before, we find ourselves in need of even the unweaned baby among the citizens of Iraq and in need of every human will which is bent on construction, the struggle against imperialism and its agents whoever they may be, and the building of the socialist society whose outlines were clearly revealed in the aims of the Revolution and the Charter of National Action of the National Front.

We are aware that the Kurdish toilers among our Iraqi people and all of our people in Kurdistan are in need of stability. They have been, and still are, in need of an opportunity for construction, mutual love and work. Yet, we have to be frank with you and tell you: it is impossible for us as politicians bearing the responsibility of this Government to confine ourselves and our thoughts to one sphere of political action only. We have not done so and we are not going to do so. We shall therefore be happy if the Kurdish Democratic Party reverses its ideas and unites its will with the will of the Progressive National Front on the question of the Autonomy Law for our Kurdish People.

Question from the audience: From what you said we can see that there are elements whose intentions are incompatible with national unity. As formulated in the legislation, the idea of autonomy is sound and clear. Do you think that the incidents of Iranian aggression have been timed to co-ordinate with the decision of the Kurdish Democratic Party to reject the Autonomy Draft?

We must say from the beginning that imperialism does not necessarily create all the negative aspects of societies, but it does not fail to make use of their abnormal negative aspects for its plans. One such aspect appears in the form of the disintegration of the unity and cohesion of any society, particularly any society in the countries of the Third World; imperialism picks on this aspect without any doubt and tries to use it for its own ends. Imperialists develop the negative tendency of this feature in such a way as may damage the society and prevent it from making any progress. As we are talking about Iraqi society, we say that the imperialists cannot allow a negative feature to come to the surface in Iraqi society without developing it and continuing the negative trend with the aim of subverting our society now and in the future.

Iraqi society, the Iraqi people and the revolution in this country have become a target. Attacks on this target are increasing as we accelerate our giant steps in building up a new society and destroying the basis of imperialism. At the same time, the plots of the reactionaries beyond our borders have been intensified in proportion to the serious steps which we have made along the road to autonomy. We should always see the relation between the provocations along our borders and the desire to prevent us from implementing the plans for autonomy through the attempts

to weaken us, because in their society the minorities are not allowed to use their own languages.

The other point is that whatever negative responses in relation to the present or the future are given by some circles in the Kurdish Democratic Party, they should not be attributed to that Party as a whole.

The last point is that according to the calculations of the Progressive National Front and the calculations of the leading Party the Kurdish question has some negative tendencies. The Political Report of the Regional Congress refers to that clearly, but the struggle of our Kurdish people in its essence as a movement of democratic liberation is a legitimate struggle.

On this basis, far from trying to deny it, we confirm that owing to the differences between the opportunities given to the Arabs and the minorities within Iraqi society (although these have been reduced to a great extent since 1958 and up to 11th March, or rather up to the present time), no balanced and homogeneous development occurred within the society of our Kurdish people as happened within Iraqi society as a whole, because of the abnormal and well-recognised circumstances prevailing in Iraq before the Revolution. On this basis, there are definitely negative aspects in our Kurdish society with distinct features which differentiate them from the other negative aspects which also exist in Iraqi society as a whole. Because of the open nature of our frontiers along the northern regions of our country since and before 11th March 1970, the agents of imperialism are having a field day in this area without receiving the stern punishment which is given to them in the other parts of our country. Therefore, some pockets allow the imperialists to achieve the aims of their plans within Iraqi society and inflict harm on the Revolution and its forward and upward march. As we emphasised, and we

reiterate our emphasis now, the solution does not lie in the negative position, but rather in the positive attitude towards our people and their legitimate aspirations and aims. The more serious results we achieve from the Autonomy Law and the organisations derived from it, the more we shall succeed in curtailing the negative aspects of Kurdish society and reducing the chances of imperialism and its tools in subverting the area. Such is the initial, central and true balance which we must maintain and rely upon in our plans, daily contacts and future actions. Therefore, the answer to the question may be summed up as follows.

There is a true and vital relationship which confirms that the actions carried out beyond the frontier by responsible Iranians have a connection with certain pockets which aspire to start a new chapter which is different from the existing one and bring about a reversionary trend within the Iraqi society. These pockets are not necessarily so numerous and significant in Baghdad as they are in Sulaymania for example.

Question: What are the guarantees given in the Autonomy Draft Law in relation to the legitimate national rights of the Turkomans?

With regard to the rights of the minorities as stated in the decisions issued by the Revolution Command Council, these rights are maintained in explicit terms in the Autonomy Law whether the minorities concerned come within the administrative borders of the Autonomy Region or within the rest of Iraqi society and the Iraqi state as a whole.

Question: Paragraph B of Article 2 of the Draft says: "The Kurdish language shall be the language of teaching

in the Region and the teaching of the Arabic language shall be compulsory at all stages of the educational system." The question now is what will be the fate of the minorities who cannot speak Kurdish? What education will they receive?

In the law, there are clear provisions enabling the minorities to send their children to special schools and all those who live within the area of the Autonomy can choose a language of their own for education.

There are many questions which remind us of the solution for the mixed areas and we should have dealt with them in accordance with the foregoing concepts. The definition of the administrative borders on the basis of tracing the shadow of the Iraqi citizen affected by autonomy is an impossible measure if it is taken in the absolute sense. Yet the administrative borders must be defined so that the majority of our Kurdish people may exercise their national rights indicated in the Autonomy Law. We have mixed areas in Iraq, such as the area of Kirkuk, which has more than one nationality and various minorities. The 11th March Proclamation provides for the demarcation of the administrative area of autonomy on the basis of a population census.

I discussed the point with our brothers that the census should be based on the population census of 1957 which reflected the natural situation existing before the abnormal circumstances which followed the year 1961. This idea was discussed by our brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party at some length, and many proposals were put forward calling for the division of the governorates into districts and then to sub-districts and finally by villages. After that we are supposed to chase after the shadow of the citizen cast on the land, as we mentioned.

During the past four years and, in fact, at all times, we have tried through the National Front or through the separate leaderships of the political parties to devise or work out such proposals as might enable us to reach some meeting points. We submitted to our brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party the following.

In regard to Kirkuk, we said that it is a governorate with a number of nationalities. Therefore, we suggested that this governorate should have a mixed administration and be linked with the capital, since the census idea as given in the 11th March Proclamation proved to be unacceptable. This proposal was turned down.

On another occasion, after ideological and political deliberations we went back and submitted another proposal. We said that Chamchamal and Klar should fall within the Autonomy area and the rest of Kirkuk should be connected with the capital. But this proposal was also rejected.

According to our own considerations and beliefs the fate of the mixed areas should be decided by one of these two methods: either by a census and on the basis of whatever is the overwhelming majority, as provided for in the 11th March Proclamation and subsequent legislation, or on the basis of a mixed administration. Our brothers, of course, put forward their latest formula, providing for a mixed administration attached to the autonomy region. We said "Why a mixed administration and attached to the Autonomy? Why not to the centre? Is the minority in an administrative area with various nationalities attached to the centre or is it attached to the Autonomy region?"

During the discussion held finally between a member of the regional command and the representatives of Brother Barzani and the Kurdish Democratic Party they said: "We are ready to put our signatures on the Draft if you accept

our point of view in regard to Kirkuk." Our answer was that the question was not one for bargaining. We did not want a tactical solution based on present-day considerations. It is a matter of laying the final and permanent guidelines for the relationship of the peoples of Iraq with each other. Their premise is unacceptable.

From the floor: It is necessary to give assurance to those who are afraid of the consequences of their affiliations or relationships, particularly students and government employees.

We must say it clearly, and it is the position of the National Front, the State and the constitutional institutions of the State on this matter. The Kurds are our people and we are looking to their future with more concern than many of those who described themselves as belonging to the Kurdish nationality. In view of considerations related to the construction of the new society, the subject is not a matter of national affiliation only. The essential point is the degree of faith in the advance of the movement for progressive reconstruction for which we are striving and the establishment of socialism in this country. If we ever find that there is one Kurd who considers himself responsible for the Kurds or one person from one of the other nationalities who considers himself to be more responsible for any minority than we are, and believes more than we do in the aims of building up a unified Iraqi society within legitimate extents, we shall then consider ourselves unfit to lead this society or to hold on to the responsibilities of office.

As far as the Kurds are concerned, they should have confidence, as they are supposed and expected to have faith as a result of the progress of the last four years and to have confidence that we are concerned about their future as

much as they are. We are concerned about their future, concerned about their country, concerned about the stability of their lives, concerned that they should take their place within Iraqi society and the process of reconstruction. There are no consequences threatening any Iraqi citizen who adopts the democratic way of discussion in accordance with the principles embodied in the Charter of National Action and the central ideas of the Revolution as a whole.

The Iraqi citizen is responsible for his actions. So long as they are compatible with the law, he will be owed respect. In so far as he violates the laws with his actions he will be accountable to the law.

With regard to the members of the Kurdish Democratic Party, anyone who tries to intimidate them by telling them that they will all be hurled in prison will be telling lies, because the Kurdish Democratic Party will continue to be represented in the National Front despite the failure to reach an agreement with its present leadership. We, therefore, do not only want to speak about giving assurances to students and government employees but we want to confirm the principles which guide the attitude of the National Front towards our people and the attitude of the authorities and the state towards our people in general.

A question was put enquiring whether consideration would be given to any amendment to the law prepared by the National Front and submitted by the Kurdish Democratic Party within the fifteen-day period mentioned earlier.

In accordance with the concepts which we have outlined, the National Front did not discuss the working paper for

the Autonomy Law to the point of its formalisation as a Law submitted to the Revolution Command Council and its adoption today, in order to avoid factionalism, which is alien to the conceptions and aspirations of the Iraqi people and Iraqi society including those of our Kurdish people.

Furthermore, when the National Front considered this Draft it did not discuss its own conceptions in isolation from the special feelings of the Kurdish Democratic Party. In our opinion, the Draft is complete and has covered all the aspects related to the 11th March Proclamation. Nevertheless, the subsequent attitudes of the Kurdish Democratic Party will decide the nature of the subsequent course of action. This is briefly our answer.

One of our brothers says: "The Political Report of the Eighth Regional Congress of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party mentioned something to the effect that there are groups in the Kurdish Democratic Party who are suspect as regards their relationships and connections. The question is: why have a dialogue with suspected elements?"

The Report did not say that the whole Kurdish Democratic Party is suspect. It spoke of certain groups within the Party, as you mentioned in your question. The Report said that despite the many negative aspects of the situation within the administrative borders of the area of Autonomy, the struggle of the Kurdish movement in its essential aim of setting up an autonomy according to democratic formulas, that is by strengthening the democratic formulas in Iraqi society, the reconstruction of a liberated Iraqi society and the building up of socialism are all part of a legitimate struggle. There are no contradictions in any of this.

Question: The national authority had fulfilled its obligations in implementing the provisions of the 11th March

Proclamation. The last of these obligations will be the Autonomy which will be announced at 8.15, that is exactly four years to the minute from the 11th March Proclamation. Has the Kurdish Democratic Party discharged its own obligations in accordance with the provisions of the 11th March Proclamation, particularly in regard to the question of handing over the heavy weapons, the broadcasting station, etc?

This is clearly referred to in the text of the 11th March Proclamation. Therefore, discussion of the readiness of the National Front to accept the Kurdish Democratic Party, as represented by its present representatives, as part of the National Front is connected with the degree of readiness on the part of the Kurdish Democratic Party to carry out fully its equivalent obligations in relation to the 11th March Proclamation. There can be no obligation which contravenes such principles.

If we fully carried out the terms of the 11th March Proclamation, established the Autonomy, allowed the present representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party to represent the Party in the Government, in the Autonomy organisations and in the National Front, while at the same time the frontiers with Iran remain open, the regular armed formations continue in existence, and the people in the area persist in denying the rule of law, we should achieve nothing.

These matters must be well balanced and reciprocated. The obligations are balanced and reciprocal in the 11th March Proclamation. Every political entity and every entity in the state or society carries an obligation. Subsequent events will take their course within the framework of these obligations.

Question: "Was there a meeting with brother Idris al-Barzani before 12 o'clock today?"

The answer is "No". After Brother Idris had gone he did not come back, but Mr Ihsan Shirzad and Mr Dara Tawfiq returned to inform us of the points of view of the Kurdish Democratic Party, as we explained. Last night I sent them a cable saying, "Up to now your proposals contain no essential change in your point of view as it was expressed in various previous meetings in which the opinion of the National Front on this matter was also explained... we hope to receive new and positive proposals before 12 noon to-morrow." We received a telegram from Idris al-Barzani in reply saying: "What we submitted is what we believe to be correct. Therefore, we have no new proposals. On our side we shall uphold whatever preserves the law." In this telegram there is a clear indication that use will be made of the subsequent period of fifteen days following the issue of the Autonomy Law.

A question was asked about the date of holding elections for the Legislative Council of the Autonomy area and the relationship between these elections and the similar elections for the central institutions of the country.

When elections are held in the northern area for the Legislative Council, other elections will be held throughout the country for the central institutions concerned and referred to in your question.

It is necessary that we give a clear and non-diplomatic answer, and say: it is not expected or visualised that elections will be held in the near future for the Legislative Council in the northern area.

The Legislative Council, however, will be set up as soon

as possible and in the first stage its members will be appointed. Democratic conditions will then be prepared for the Legislative Council elections in accordance with the law.

Question: In matters affecting the destiny of a people and as an accepted constitutional principle, a referendum is held to ascertain the opinion of the people concerned. Do you consider it useful to conduct such a referendum on a matter of destiny of this kind?

During the discussions held with the Kurdish Democratic Party, in the extended meetings held recently and attended by Mr Habib Muhammad Karim on the dates we have already mentioned, we submitted this proposal. The matter was discussed in this way.

We asked: If you insist on your opinions and we as a National Front continue to hold different views, what is the solution? No answer was given. We then said that we had a proposal. The solution was to submit both formulas to the people. As we said on various previous occasions, if autonomy were purely a matter of constitutional and legal concepts we would have called it "the autonomy of Iraq" because it is essentially a matter which concerns the whole of the Iraqi people and not a section of them. In its real essence it is a matter of laying down guidelines for the present and the future of the country in relation to our long-term objectives and our destiny. Therefore we propose that both formulas be submitted to the Iraqi people, who will then give their opinion in a referendum. The formula which attracts the absolute majority will be the one binding upon all the national parties. If this could not be done it should be possible to table another proposal involving the submission of both formulas to representatives of the people in the National Assembly.

The brothers in the Kurdish Democratic Party did not give their opinion in the same session, but in a later discussion they said that they did not approve of this proposal and did not accept it; it is true, we all agree to and accept the importance of the referendum in matters of destiny but it is not necessary to refer all of them to the people.

We have many cases in the history of revolutions, and the records of national struggle and reconstruction provide us with numerous cases on the subject.

Interview with Arab and Foreign Journalists

On 8th April 1974 Saddam Hussein received Arab and foreign journalists who visited Baghdad on the 27th anniversary of the foundation of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and answered their questions.

Iraq played a major role in the Arab-Israeli war which broke out on 6th October 1973, sending troops with tanks and aircraft to fight alongside the Syrians and Egyptians. Iraq did not agree with Syria's acceptance on 22nd October of the ceasefire arranged by the UN Security Council, and shortly afterwards withdrew its troops from Syria. Iraq also took non-military action in the war. On 7th October it nationalised the US share in the Basrah Petroleum Company (the 23.75 per cent owned by Standard Oil of New Jersey and Mobil Oil) in retaliation against US support for Israel. On 20th October the Dutch share (14.25 per cent) was nationalised for the same reason, and on 20th December the 5 per cent Gulbenkian interest was nationalised in retaliation for the anti-Arab and colonialist attitudes of the Portuguese Government at that time. On 8th December 1975 Iraq nationalised the remaining foreign interests in BPC held by BP, Shell, and Compagnie Française des Pétroles.

Part 1 of the Questions

Question: What is the explanation for the Cabinet reshuffle of yesterday?[1]

Question: With regard to the participation of western companies in development projects alongside Soviet friends, what are the circumstances of this participation?

Question: With regard to the question of the National Front, which is considered one of the most advanced experiments in the region, has the alliance of the National Front extended as far as the rank and file of the political parties in Iraq? How deeply is it consolidated at the level of the rank and file and the various parties within the democratic organisations and institutions?

Question: With regard to the Kurdish question, after the National Front, or rather the Government of Iraq, has issued the Autonomy Law — undoubtedly a very significant step representing a patriotic and progressive attitude in solving one of the most important and dangerous

[1] This refers to the resignation of the Kurdish ministers connected with the Barzani leadership and their replacement by other members of the KDP and other Kurds.

national questions — on what power inside Kurdistan will unified Iraq depend in implementing the autonomy?

Question: Iraq has recently taken some fundamental preliminary steps towards building up the economy, such as wresting control from foreign oil monopolies. As the Revolution has solved the economic problem and started to undertake social measures and as it has laid the basis for a democratic parliamentary rule (not in the liberal parliamentary sense but in the sense of a people's democratic parliament) why is it that this issue still remains in need of clarification, notwithstanding our own appreciation of the great progress achieved by the Iraqi experiment?

Question: We believe that the greatest economic reform made by the revolutionary Government of Iraq was the nationalisation of the country's oil wealth. Of course, the Government of Iraq encountered difficulties in achieving that aim. Have they overcome these difficulties, and how?

Question: With regard to the Kurdish question, we hear that Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani is still sheltering in the mountains. What would the attitude of the Central Government be towards him if he persisted in his struggle?

Question: Can we link the position of Mulla Mustafa al-Barzani vis-à-vis the Kurdish question and his indifference towards the Autonomy Law, with what is going on in the Middle East region?

Question: Is there a particular state supporting Barzani or supplying him with arms?

Answers to Part 1

From the beginning and according to all our assessments, these matters seem to be linked together. We cannot scientifically conceive a result without a cause. Nothing floats entirely over the surface. Without any exaggeration, all that may be taking place or that you may be hearing about was included in our calculations years ago, and not just months ago. To reassure yourselves about the accuracy of my words, please read the part of the Political Report published in the special issue of *Al-Thawra* yesterday, 7th April 1974, after its adoption by the Regional Command in the middle of November 1972.

We do know the facts, and our information is derived from numerous sources, some of which are related to our ideological premises and the political requirements for putting such ideologies into practice. Others are related to recent Arab experiences and the bitter setbacks suffered by the Arabs. Our Party has been among the foremost in experiencing such bitter setbacks. We know and we have learned a great deal. On this basis, we have become accustomed to forecasting many developments, if not all, in advance. I can definitely confirm that nothing has taken us by surprise, not even what some observers abroad consider the equivalent of surprise. Our expectations based on our calculations may fall short of, or go beyond, what actually happens, but all that has happened in Iraq, indeed all that has happened in the Arab homeland since 1972, down to the smallest detail, was certainly anticipated and inferred in advance. I mentioned the year 1972 and not 1971 or 1970, bearing in mind that the Revolution was born on 17/30 July 1968 and will soon be six years old. It is natural to say "since 1972", because we don't want to say that we prepared for everything in advance before taking office.

The essential premises for visualising the second phase of

the unfolding of the Revolution were derived from our own experience, the experience of our Party, and also from our ideological and theoretical premises. Yet it is not enough to visualise the important details of Arab or international affairs without having direct experience of them at various levels. Therefore, I say that since 1972, we have not been surprised by any Arab event or even any international event. We have not been surprised either by an event in our internal affairs since 17th July 1968. In order to visualise the attempts of the counter-revolution, we must begin by visualising the march of the Revolution. The attempts, methods, formulas, timing and forces of the counter-revolution are not isolated from the formulas, methods, timing, forces, aims and policies of the march of the Revolution.

For a long time in this part of the world, the imperialists have been used to seeing the establishment of patriotic governments with genuine aims and attempts to put them into practice, but they soon hastened by various means, sometimes through pressure and at others by lying in wait, to weaken these attempts and their consequences whenever they affected the interests of the imperialists and the vital support in the Arab homeland on which they relied. In the light of their own experience in this area, they thought that the Revolution proclaimed in Announcement No. 1 of 17/30 July 1968 was an attempt which they would soon be able to cut short in the next phase at least, if not to bring under control from the very beginning. Because of our limited and simple experience, imperialism resorts to swimming with the current when it leaves its source, if unable to control it at the outset, in the belief that beyond the source the current's resistance to imperialism becomes weaker and demands less effort and loss to control.

In all this, imperialism relies on the nature of its former experiences with national *coups d'Etat* and movements

which are declared to be revolutions in the first announcements and the publicised intentions of their leaders. We are now entitled to say, not as a mere allegation, but on the basis of a legacy of serious work of which we are proud, that imperialism has realised that this Revolution was something new and that it was not a revolution according to its first announcement only, but also in its ideological premises, its policies, its periodic slogans, its strategic objectives, its daily conduct of internal affairs and its Arab and international policies.

It could be taken for granted that imperialism would try to undermine a revolution of this type in an area so vital to its interests, so that it needs no elaboration from me. It is taken for granted that imperialists will make attempts in various forms and guises and on various fronts. Sometimes they strike from outside, sometimes from within. On one occasion they may try to establish cells for a reversion in the organisations of the state or even in the apparatus of the Revolution itself. On another occasion they may try to inspire or instruct some of their agents at the frontiers to strike at our external perimeter. Another method is to offer their services in one form or another, directly or indirectly, "to make Iraq a paradise, if only... etc." It is not necessary for them to speak in an explicit and direct manner, but you sense the "if only..." from the various acts made in our direction.

Therefore, what happens can never, by any means, take us by surprise or affect our morale. It is true that we might prefer it not to happen, but when we make our calculations we do so objectively and rationally and assume that it may happen. We therefore face the situation with all courage, self-confidence and a deep belief in our masses and in their complete ability to block such attempts. Our main asset lies in our masses, on whom we confidently depend. We can

never imagine that this wall we lean on will collapse one day and expose our backs, as the imperialists dream.

Therefore, our efforts in the northern region are inseparable from this great legacy of achievements and ideas which are opposed to imperialism and its interests. We are opposed to imperialism openly, fearlessly and without any embarrassment, ambiguity or seasonal fluctuation. In other words, we do not swear at imperialism when we feel cross with it for a certain period and then suddenly lower or pack up our banners and slogans. Our hostility towards imperialism has been established since we came into existence and will continue as long so we continue to exist as a party and not as individuals. It was natural, therefore, for imperialism to try, and try very hard. We knew in advance, as we indicated in the Report of mid-November 1972, that the second stage for the imperialists would be to launch an organised counter-attack with newly invented methods, after the failure of their earlier methods of confronting us and after they had been surprised more than once by the unexpected reserves we threw into the battle, which tipped the balance in our favour. In addition, we have some idea about the concealed reserves the imperialists have devised, some of which are mentioned in the Political Report to the 8th Regional Conference. Others we are not making public for our own tactical reasons, lest we should alert them to the extent of our knowledge.

They think that we are unaware of their devices. I assume that it is a legitimate part of the calculations of responsible figures in the leadership of a nation, trade union or a military unit to make their enemy imagine that they are unaware of certain things. When they confront an enemy it is unnecessary for them to reveal their full knowledge of that enemy. This will help them to trap him into error and mislead him into believing that they are unaware of what

step he may take next. Thus, they can prepare themselves to confront him and inflict the heaviest of losses on him when they engage him in battle.

Once more I say that we hope that what may happen does not happen. We worked very hard to this end, but as we did so we realised, according to our own rational calculation, that it was going to happen.

Now, after this introduction, we can deal directly with the subject of some of the leaders of the Kurdish Democratic Party, their flight to the mountains and the reports about the massive US aid given them via Iran. This story did not take us by surprise. At the same time, I am sure that those who sell themselves to the foreigners will be disappointed. When our people realise that this Government represents their present and strategic interests and that the men responsible for this administration (represented in the various organisations of which the most important is the Ba'th Party) are the men who are trying hardest — and are proving their seriousness and sincerity in the attempt — to build up the new society which achieves the aspirations of all Iraqis, they cannot be deceived by what was said and heard in the past. The man of Iraq is now a new man. It may be that not everyone in Iraq is the "homo sapiens" of the future, but he is certainly a new man who has evolved from ancient man in every respect. This is our achievement and this is the source of our confidence that the future belongs to us and not to any evil individual whether in Iraq or in the Arab homeland, and whether he is Arab in nationality or non-Arab.

Some people ask: "How can the Revolution stand up to individuals who can withdraw to the mountains and receive US weapons? At the same time, how are you going to stand up to the Iranian forces along the eastern border, when there are ten million souls in Iraq and more than two

hundred million in America, one of the two greatest powers in the world, with the effective weapons of America, and with Iran continually buying arms and stockpiling them?" Those who are linked with the interests of imperialism feel optimistic, whereas the progressive noble patriots who are concerned about the success of our experiment feel worried and apprehensive. We say to the subversive elements and to everyone else: If Iran has a weapon, we have one that is much stronger than theirs. Our weapon is not a conventional weapon from the technological point of view. The authorities in Iran can buy the conventional arms in the markets of the west, but they cannot pay a nation to believe in them or in their policies. We stand in the latter part of the twentieth century. The time when the army was no more than a professional body divorced from the people, their hopes, aspirations and reactions, and from the nation at large has passed.

Who is the Iranian Army going to fight, and why? Who are the Iranian people going to fight and for what? The Army of Iran will not fight the Iraqi Army, because they don't believe that it is in their interests. We are sure of this. Let the Shah of Iran try — let him try and see whether the Iranian Army will fight the Iraqi Army. Let him try his luck and see whether the Iranian people will be on his side or turn in the opposite direction.

In this, we are not talking about a dream or illusion. At the same time, we are not basing what we say on the methods of the intelligence services. We mainly rely on the nature of our Government, its objectives and progress, and also on our appreciation of peoples' hopes, and the direction of their march. We are not saying this as a conventional declaration of defiance. We would prefer to address ourselves to the responsible rulers in Iran and say: "The former role of the generals is finished."

The approach which people respect now is the one which stems from the heart of the interests of the people, and means a genuine desire to build sound relationships between various regimes and neighbouring countries and solve any problem by peaceful means, without resorting to the method of sabre-rattling. The good leader and wise ruler is the one who feeds his people. There is no honour in talking about stockpiling armaments at a time when our people sleep naked on the pavement, walk barefoot and find little food to eat. These weapons were not made in Iran, nor were they made through the efforts of a people believing in a certain regime for the sake of defending what is right. These are weapons imported for the purpose of evil.

What serves the people of Iran is the search for a way to build a society free from hunger, free from people sleeping on the pavement or in the open air, a society with no individuals gorging themselves and others with empty stomachs. Such are the conditions in Iran now and this is the honourable way of reform which we shall support once it is proclaimed in Iran by the responsible authorities.

Again we return to the subject, to define the matter clearly and say: "We endeavour not to fight on too many fronts. This is no secret. This is the conduct of revolutions vis-à-vis their enemies and the method of prudent politics. But if many fronts are opened against us, we shall fight on all of them. We shall fight with extraordinary stamina and we shall fight with extraordinary style. We shall also make such sacrifices as will achieve an extraordinary victory. We shall not feel dejected when the fighting becomes an urgent necessity in defence of our rights, our sovereignty and our hopes. We shall not feel dejected then or when we enter into ferocious battles on many fronts. We shall have confidence in our victory, not on one front only but on all fronts. We derive our confidence from our unlimited resilience and

great vigour. We are not so short-sighted and rash in our calculations as to aspire to settle our battles on all fronts within a year or two or a month or two. We may try to settle some of them as best we can according to a timetable in keeping with the march of the Revolution. We know, also, that our battles will be prolonged and severe and will stretch over a long period. It is not important to enquire or ask ourselves, "Will there be fighting ahead of us? Shall we fight battles?" These are questions which will be resolved by the march which we agreed to join. What is important in all of this is to enquire, in view of our march, "Have we prepared what is necessary to give us victory in the end?" This is the question to which with all pride we can answer "Yes". "Yes" in our internal battles and "yes" in regard to those who strike at the outer fence of our homeland.

Here I am in front of you carrying no arms. There is a tank unit a few scores of metres away from this place. An unarmed civilian cannot face up to a tank. This unit which is stationed here on guard duty might launch an attack against the system. In such an eventuality, all of us unarmed individuals from the President of the Republic down to the most junior member of the Party would be unable to stand against this weapon. But the weapon is in our hands and other weapons are in our hands also, because those who are in charge of these arms realise and believe that the people who are entrusted with steering the affairs of the country are moving in the right direction, in which they themselves believe, in everything from the daily working details to the strategic objectives. However strong a guard may be, he cannot raise his weapon and keep it raised for more than a few hours. The time will come when his arm becomes tired.

We are not annoyed by the expansion of the armies and abundance of weapons in the service of the reactionary

regimes, because the more their armies expand horizontally the greater opportunities will be created for the sons of the peasants, the workers and the people as a whole to replace the other men whose allegiance is linked with the upper strata of the regime for reasons of interest and shared destiny. The larger armies they have and the more they talk about them, the greater the opportunity opens up to repeat what happened in Iraq in 1958. The Revolution of 14 July took place here because of the expansion of the Army and the subsequent recruitment of the sons of peasants and ordinary people. Had the Army been limited in its composition, the Revolution would not have occurred. As far as we are concerned, we can have an army of ten million, not because of any special allegiance but because of our dependence on a policy in which we believe and in which the student and the housewife believe. Such are our convictions. Such are our conceptions and calculations. We believe that those who try to act on the opposite assumption will always lose.

You will ask us with anxiety in your hearts, "How can you fight on two fronts supported by America?" On 7th October, one day after the October War, we announced on our radio and television that we had nationalised America's share (of the Basrah Petroleum Company) as a retaliation against her conduct towards the Arabs. Some people considered this too much from Iraq, a country of ten million people meting out punishment to the United States of America. Other people, however, considered it a natural policy in the light of the considerations I have just mentioned. What we say is this: When we retaliated in this fashion against America, we had prior knowledge of America's reactions against us. We did not build our policy on an illusion or lapse of mind. We made our calculations; we knew what reaction to expect, and consequently what

was required to cope with the reaction. We belong to that kind of species which strikes fiercely and at the heart whenever somebody strikes at us in this way. We are not of the species which puts up with a blockade of our inner gates. Those who imagine that they can penetrate our outer perimeter to attack and strike us within are deluded. We shall cross over our outer perimeter to strike at their inner gates and those of their interests wherever they may be in the area. We are not divulging any secret in this policy. This is our line.

The 8th Regional Congress of our Party clearly outlined the possibility of co-existence between different social systems. But this requires some pre-conditions. We don't launch the slogan of co-existence unilaterally and then stand by with folded arms while the others beat the drums of aggression. At a meeting with journalists from Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, we said that whoever tries to climb over our fence, we shall try to climb over his roof. We still uphold this policy. We are peaceful people and ready to solve our problems by peaceful means. We are ready to understand clearly and appreciate any legitimate aspiration, but we stand with unlimited stubbornness against any illegitimate ambition or attempt. Yes, we are able to fight on two fronts if we have to, and emerge triumphant on both of them.

There is still the other point. Who is going to carry the weapons? America can provide weapons without limit. But the question is "Who is going to carry the weapons?" Our Kurdish people struggled for many years for certain rights, which may be summed up in the slogan of autonomy. Without a National Front, there can be no autonomy. There is, therefore, both Autonomy and a National Front to lead a unified Iraq. Both the Autonomy and the National Front have been realised. Who is then going to carry the weapons?

Well, there may be some individuals among those who are carrying arms for the time being, who are compelled to do so by the pressure of terror exercised by a group of people who used to be masters of the situation in the Northern Region until very recent times. They were the law. They were everything. Consequently, any citizen confronted with armed men ordering him to go up to the mountain, cannot help going up there. But how long will he stay on the mountain? Now some of these citizens have begun to come back to the valley.

America can give arms, but there will be few who will carry them. These weapons do not frighten us; what bothers us is the gunner's unclear field of view of the target. We are determined to remove any obstructions between him and his true target so that nothing else will be hit. So much has become clear. There are now two lines of battle: that of the people who believe in building up the new socialist system, the system which opposes imperialism wholeheartedly with all its interests, tendencies and policies, and the other line manned by those who follow the opposite course. We are not concerned about such people. On the contrary, let them stay in the other trench. We shall then be able to strike at them with better accuracy than if they stay in our midst.

We must emphasise that no military operations are taking place now, as claimed by the western information media, or, more accurately, the hostile and misleading media — because there are people working with the western press who do seek the truth — but the hostile and misleading information media give untrue reports. The question is: "Should we keep silent about those who stand against the sovereignty of the country and defy its laws?" The answer is "No". We shall use suitable means to stop them if they go on with their unlawful and unpatriotic ways. Don't

be worried when you hear that a military unit attacked a certain place and there was some fighting. This is something which we must do. If matters reach this point, we should have no hesitation. The decisive actions, however, will be shaped by politics and not by arms. This is what we believe. The decisive part of the task of removing a pocket trench of the retrograde gang will not be achieved by arms but by politics. As far as our policy responds to the interests of Kurds and Arabs, so it will be capable of pushing the reversionary pocket back to its line of surrender.

We are confident that our position is correct, confident that our Kurdish people understand it, and confident that the members of the Central Committee of the Kurdish Democratic Party, who are still at this moment in the mountains, understand it equally.

As for the National Front and the question whether it has reached a degree of activity, internal co-ordination and strength among the rank and file of the parties for them to be capable of discharging their tasks, I can say this: We hope and work to turn the National Front into an effective instrument for the upbuilding of the new society and the mobilisation of the masses in accordance with the aims of the Revolution and the Charter. But has the present set-up reached that level in all details as we would wish? The answer is "Yes" at the central level and "No" at the grass-roots level. Our question is: has it achieved the level of perfection? The answer is "No".

This is a matter which depends on time and relates to the entire negative legacy of Iraq, the legacy which we have shed in thought and policy at the level of leadership and of advanced cadres, and also within the greater part of our Party organisations. I say "the greater part" without intending to mean that there is some opposition. This was not my meaning. But can I be certain that every organised

supporter of the Ba'th Party behaves every day as the leadership wants? The answer is "No". Yet, in our policy and objectives, our affairs move definitely as planned and as desired by the leadership. To clarify whether there is opposition to the National Front within the Ba'th Party or within the Communist Party, I can answer for both of them. No, there is no opposition. In addition to the decisions adopted by the Congresses and leadership of the Party, there is indeed genuine enthusiasm for finding better formulas which may enable the National Front to take the position envisaged for it and acquire the image which we are anxious to give it now and in the future.

Work and the task of co-ordination are transferred now from the leadership level, from the level of the High Committee of the Progressive National Front and its Secretariat to the organisations at the level of governorates. The Front now has organisations in all governorates and is not confined to the higher leadership body. There are also special bureaux attached to the High Committee of the Front. At the same time the task of co-ordination has been moved from the level of leadership of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party to that of the branches in the governorates. We now feel quite satisfied.

In its present or future shape, the Front is a new and unprecedented political form in the Arab homeland, and we are proud of it. We endeavour to enrich this experiment and to put it at the disposal of the revolutionary fighters inside and outside the Arab homeland, so that they may benefit from it as much as they can and criticise its negative aspects for the benefit of others.

Now it is time to explain the ministerial changes and the implications behind the appointment of Ubaydullah, the eldest son of Mustafa al-Barzani, as a minister in the Government. Allegiance at the present time is not a family

or tribal matter. Such concepts belong to the past. Nowadays son and father differ in deciding which attitudes are correct. This is evidence of the inefficacy of the policies, conceptions and expectations of some others. We feel sure, and we have information to support our feeling, that there are others within the Barzani family who truly and sincerely sympathise with our policy and are working to the same end. You will yourselves see in the future the places from which supporters of our policy will emerge.

The question is no longer a matter of family allegiance or tribal affiliation. Our people can no longer be deceived. The clarity of the policies of the Revolution is entirely due to our concern to apply these policies to all Iraqis of goodwill, to all Arabs wherever they may be and to all progressive people in the world, as far as this is possible and in accordance with the amount of trust, respect and support our policies receive from such people. On what forces can Iraq rely in the implementation of autonomy? Iraq relies on the people in this task. We have neither strength nor ability apart from our dependence on God and the strength of the masses. We cannot deceive ourselves or allow ourselves to be deceived one day by imagining any other source of strength.

With regard to the new picture of the construction of the economy within the framework of our philosophy and on the basis of our fundamental premises, we don't isolate politics from economics. At the same time, we believe that our progress must be well balanced. We must not indulge ourselves too far in politics at a time when we lag behind in our efforts for economic reconstruction planned in harmony with the declared political targets. We must not work for the new economic reconstruction without strengthening our people's organisations and political institutions and without making any attempt to build them up continuously according to the circumstances of the situation. At the same

time, we must not discuss the next chapter of our future whilst there are shortcomings in our school syllabus and the supervision of education in nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools and universities. We must not pay attention to one aspect of our society and neglect the other. The form of progress which we accordingly adopt is a balanced one with an ordered movement in all the branches and fields of society. In such a way we pay attention to the importance of a good balance, to our foreign and Arab policy, to the mobilisation of the masses and party cadres, to the new economic reconstruction and the eradication of backwardness. Our investment programme for this year has the following order of priorities: agriculture, industry, and then other fields. Our oil policies may be summed up in the slogan that one of the two last barrels produced in the world must come from Iraq. What I mean is that we should not use up our oil wealth too early, but also that the very last barrel should not be an Iraqi barrel, because the world, by then, will have abandoned this source of energy for a new one. This policy is based on a number of concepts and important guidelines of which the most important is the fulfilment of our obligations towards our development programme and parts of the ordinary budget, to our Pan-Arab nationalist commitments, and to our world wide commitments to support the forces of liberation, peace and democracy. These are the basic considerations which decide for us how many tons of oil should be produced in 1975 and how many tons in 1980 and so on.

A level of production which is adjusted to the prices will be in harmony with the fundamental issues I mentioned before.

In reply to the question: Have you laid the foundations for the establishment of a parliamentary system in the revolutionary sense, that is through the emergence of con-

stitutional and democratic institutions representing the people, and the gathering of representatives of the people who may take decisions and participate in drawing up and adopting general policy, this is what I say: The National Assembly Bill was announced, but the formation of the assembly was suspended on account of those responsible figures who at that time represented the Kurdish Democratic Party. I said, "at that time" because we have now turned a new page. It has become illogical to form a national assembly before the approval of the Autonomy Law and without deputies representing the Kurds in the National Assembly.

The next few months will witness the birth of the National Assembly after the settlement of outstanding issues. I say "settlement", because there won't be any more negotiations or alliances with those who represented the Kurdish Democratic Party, or more correctly those who will shortly be set aside by the events of the next stage. What I have just said is meant for those who prefer to throw themselves into the arms of the imperialists and remain on the barricades of the opposite side. As for the rest, we have no doubt that there are members of the Central Committee (of the KDP) who are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs and are in full harmony with the trend of the Revolution. In the first stage, members of the National Assembly will be "selected" and not "appointed", because "appointment" could mean that one of the responsible departments of the state would decide by itself whom to appoint without reference to the opinions of the national forces and national parties. It is more appropriate to say "selection". The membership of the National Assembly would be decided by selection and later on by election.

The representatives of the national forces will select their deputies and the trade unions and federations will also

select theirs. The decision of the Command Council of the Revolution as the highest authority in the country will confirm the selections made by the various bodies concerned.

Has Iraq overcome the difficulties of nationalisation? There were some small difficulties — less than the difficulties which had been expected. There are complete statements, figures and data showing that there were no serious difficulties encountered by the act of nationalisation within the circumstances prevailing in Iraq. If such was the case here in Iraq, other countries should find it within their capabilities to nationalise, once they make the decision and prepare the necessary foundations. When the monopolistic companies bowed down and accepted the form of agreement nine months after the Act of Nationalisation, on 1st March 1973, Iraq had already marketed 48 million tons of oil out of a maximum pumping capacity of 58 million tons, whereas before nationalisation the companies had laid down a production schedule of a maximum of 31 million tons on the pretext that there were difficulties in marketing and other technical problems. The difference between 31 and 48 million tons is very revealing and indicates whether there were or were not any serious difficulties. The nationalisation succeeded in nine months, and exposed the extent to which the dubious activities in the high mountains are connected with the imperialist plans in this area.

Our clear policies towards the Palestine question and the just struggle of our Arab people against Zionism, our attitude towards the so-called peaceful solutions of the problem, our independent approach to the nationalist and patriotic questions, and all such principal issues must be related to the counter-revolutionary attempts and the imperialist plans for the region. We must see the connection between the attempts which are perpetrated against Iraq and the noble role played by this country together with her

sister states in the battle of 6th October, and the role of Iraq in affecting the imperialist plans in the past and in the future.

I imagine that we have covered all the questions submitted so far and if we have not missed anything let us move to another subject.

Part 2 of the Questions

Question: Your Excellency, is there any shift in your international and Arab policies? It is noteworthy that Iraqi policy tends towards co-operation with the western countries, European or American in particular, despite the rupture in diplomatic relations with America. Will that lead to political co-operation, especially in view of your statement that you do not separate politics from economics?

Question: What are your views about the question of peace between the Arabs and Israel?

Question: It is noted that the revenues of Iraq are sufficient for the development projects of this country with some surplus remaining in hand. We noted recently that Iraq began to accept foreign loans, particularly a Japanese loan amounting to about one billion dollars. Is there any explanation for this?

Question: In regard to the area of the Arabian Gulf in which Iraq is one of the Gulf states, some attempts are being made to lay foundations of federations for Arab Gulf co-ordination to face the dangers of the future after the energy crisis. What is the attitude of Iraq? Will Iraq participate in this co-ordination? Are there any schemes submitted by Iraq?

Question: What is the relationship between the Government of the Revolution in Iraq and the Syrian Government, which is assumed to be run by the same Party?

Question: The foreign information media try to portray Iraq as if it were a Soviet colony, or will soon become one. Is it possible to clarify what kind of relationship exists between Iraq and the Soviet Union?

Question: How can we understand the Soviet position in the Middle East crisis in the light of Soviet dealings with Iraq and as a result of previous experiences until now?

Question: Lebanon is beginning to suffer difficulties in the present period and will suffer more in the future as a result of the local and international inflation due to a large extent to increased oil prices. The agreement between Lebanon and Iraq provided for the supply to Lebanon of oil which has helped Lebanon in this field. How far is Iraq prepared to co-operate with Lebanon in the future and assist in overcoming the difficult stage which is expected?

Question: The second stage of the Geneva talks seems to be expected to take place according to current Arab and international policies. At the same time Iraq seems to persist in upholding the same slogan that it has advocated. What kind of result should we expect from the next stage of the Arab struggle in general and the Palestinian struggle in particular?

Question: Today, and after the conclusion of the oil battle by the resumption of exports to America, can we consider that the way in which oil has been used has made it

a weapon supporting the military front in the struggle for liberation or a means of eliminating the role of the military front and replacing it by a political solution as a substitute for total liberation?

Question: In regard to the acceptance of a Palestinian state, the leaderships and some Arab revolutionary circles say: "Let the Palestinians decide their own future. If they want a Palestinian state we must agree to it." Do you consider this policy at variance with the nationalist views which consider the Palestine question as one which concerns every Arab state and not just the Palestinians?

Question: Can we ask His Excellency to tell us a little about the developments in Turkish-Iraqi relations, particularly in the present circumstances?

Question: What is the attitude of Iraq towards the question of selling oil to Islamic countries at reduced prices?

Question: Since they began, Soviet-Arab relations have passed through various forms which have sometimes represented successes and gains for both parties and at other times have undergone some crisis. After the experience which as a whole was favourable for the successful continuation of this friendship, what are the foundations which you consider necessary to keep this relationship free from random shocks and tension?

Question: How are relations with Kuwait? What stage did the talks on the frontier issue reach? Have they fixed a date for your visit to Kuwait?

Question: It has been observed that there is a duality in

Iraqi policy towards the Gulf; on the one hand there are brotherly relations at state level and on the other there are conferences and slogans against what are called agents and reactionary regimes, etc. How can we reconcile these two tendencies?

Question: The opponents of Iraq who now refer to the stage since the October War say that Iraq repeats the "rejection" slogan merely as a verbal exercise without offering any alternative.

Question: There has been a lot of talking recently about the question of unity between Syria and Iraq. Is it possible to have some clarification of Iraq's attitude to this question?

Question: What is the attitude of Iraq towards the positions adopted by the oil-producing Arab states, both as regards their decision to prohibit exports to the United States, Holland and other states and their decision to lift the ban? Does this mean the end or at least the suspension of the co-ordination of oil policies between Iraq and the oil-exporting Arab countries? For how long will this rupture in oil policy continue? Will this rupture cause damage in the future to the nationalist cause in the Arab countries?

Question: What is the exact attitude of Iraq towards Syria's position in regard to the question of war, the question of military disengagement, or the question of a serious attitude towards the Geneva conference particularly when we bear in mind that the Government in Syria is, as our brother said, assumed to be in the hands of the Ba'th Party?

Question: What can Iraq give to the Palestinian revolution if this revolution decides to carry on the struggle against the peaceful solutions which are now under discussion?

Answers to Part 2

We have outlined in what way our internal policies and our Arab policies stem from the doctrines of our Party. Nevertheless, we shall clarify this. We must refer to one aspect of international policies which is related to some of these questions. We don't suffer from the complex of the conventional calculations of some regimes, nor are we afraid of dealing with any state in the world, with the exception of the Zionist entity, which we do not consider a state. We don't believe that there is any possibility of co-operation with this entity at any time. The rupture in our diplomatic relations with the United States of America is, therefore, a political matter based on principle. It will continue as long as American policy persists in the same ways which prompted us to sever diplomatic relations. At the same time, we have no complex or feelings of sensitivity about dealing with any company in the world on a basis that preserves our sovereignty and ensures legitimate mutual benefits according to patriotic, national and international standards. In this country there are massive projects on an exceptional and enormous scale. Some are bigger than can be imagined. The idea of isolation from the rest of the world in an insular self-sufficient existence is irrelevant and objectionable. Interchange and co-operation with the rest of the world within a framework which preserves and does not jeopardise our sovereignty, our independent national personality and our national interests,

are the kind of policies which we pursue in our economic and political dealings and in all other fields.

We therefore must co-operate and deal with various states and companies to implement any projects in Iraq which may be outside our experience and potentialities or capacity to cover wholly, or beyond our technical capabilities. In Iraq we now have contracts with American companies and with some from other western countries. We are co-operating with numerous western states and with all the socialist states, without exception. Our national interests decide our dealings with all of them. Sometimes we deal with them in strategical matters, as is the case with the socialist states. Sometimes we deal with them on the basis of temporary mutual interest, as is the case with some western and American companies. A contractor comes forward and carries out a certain project for us within a specified period. We agree on the price, the period and the technical specifications; he carries out his obligations; we pay him and settle our obligations and then he departs. There is, therefore, no contradiction between our decision to sever diplomatic relations with America and to deal commercially with some American companies on these bases. The presence of these American companies will never open the door to a change in our political programme, but neither will our political position vis-à-vis the United States prevent us from dealing with some American companies on the basis I have just mentioned.

Our brother, the Japanese journalist, asked about Iraqi policy towards Israel. We shall deal with the key points and leave him to work out the related details. We begin by saying: The war of 5th June 1967 was a result and not a cause. The problems began before that date. What is this problem? Here we invite the whole world to answer this question clearly and with due reference to the question of

justice, the general principles of humanity and the right of peoples to determine their own future. We believe that the origin of the question lies in the existence of a peaceful people living on their land with co-existence among their various religious communities. These people were expelled from their land and were replaced by hordes migrating from Japan, from the United States, from the Soviet Union and from everywhere else. These hordes came and gathered in this place at the expense of the people who were expelled and left to live in the wilderness. This is the origin of the problem. This is the essence of the basic differences between the policies Iraq is advocating and those advocated by many others, Arabs and non-Arabs. The 5th June and the 6th October are therefore results and not causes. What is the cause? Let us look for it. If we identify it courageously and justly we shall be able to reach the solution. Thus we believe that none of the other schemes which have been proposed treats the cause. They treat the results related to the cause, not the cause itself. It follows that all these solutions will undoubtedly only be temporary and incompatible with justice and equity.

One of the brothers said that the oil revenues of Iraq are immense and yet Iraq tends to accept loans. This is my answer: We have no reserves in the banks. When we nationalised (the oil company) we had no reserves. Our huge reserves and immensely hard currency were our people. Our immense reserves, hard currency, and principal resource are still our people. We have, at the same time, to prepare for everything. We took loans out of need and not of profligacy. We took them on the basis of present and future calculations. The revenues which we talk about come from oil passing through the oil pipelines, some of which lie outside our sovereignty. When we stand up to the plans of imperialism we do not imagine these plans to be confined to

activating the Kurdish question. They will try everything. We must be prepared on every front to surprise the imperialists with unexpected measures. We must play as they play with three or four cards up our sleeves, in order to defeat them. We shall not fight for Iraq in Iraq. We shall never give them the chance to draw us into such a situation. If they probe us in one place we shall probe them in four places. Our economic and political calculations are based on our resolve not to kneel to anyone at any time other than to the Almighty. This is our policy. Our aim is to leave no room for an enemy to twist our arm one day and cause us pain, or make us waive our rights and accept bargaining or be taken by surprise.

The loans which we sought we wanted for investment in our development projects and to make use of technical experience and financial resources for their speedy implementation. This is the basis on which our borrowing policy was founded. Throughout the world, the policy of acquiring loans is not based on a direct need for finance but rather on the desire to obtain the associated technical capabilities and capacity for speedy implementation. This is the aspect which makes us interested in the loans, rather than our interest in them as a source of currency.

I don't believe that we are giving imperialism ideas when we say that it is certain to play tricks with the oil pipelines outside our sovereignty. This is something which we expect every day, every week and every month. We have prepared for the confrontation calmly. We won't be taken by surprise at all if one day we hear that they have struck at the pipeline somewhere or somehow. We shall strike at twenty of their pipelines, but this won't be enough either. We have to decide in advance how we can endure a very long period before we can strike at their twenty lines.

With regard to our policy towards the Gulf and the

invitation to some Gulf states to amalgamate their efforts in such a way as to challenge the plans and attempts made against the Arabism of the Gulf, we confirm that we support any attempt to preserve the Arabism of the Gulf. It is incumbent on all the Gulf states at this stage to co-ordinate their efforts as a matter of urgency to preserve the Arabism of the Gulf.

Have we any definite scheme? Our scheme may be summed up as combining our efforts to stand against foreign aggression and reject the intervention of any state in the world which may adversely affect the Arabism of the Gulf. Iran should not be allowed to send its army to Oman. The ruler of Oman should in the first place say to himself "I must first solve my problems with my people, as this is better than asking for foreign help." He should ask himself once more this question: Can anything in the world be protected by the foreigner for ever? There is not one regime in the whole world protected by foreigners for eternity. I think there is a great difference between the case when history speaks of a man who used the foreigners against his people and when it speaks of a man using his people against the foreigners. We support all efforts to protect the Arabism of the Gulf, and the difference between our system and the systems of the Gulf states will not stand between us or prevent us from co-ordinating our honest intentions. This is a matter which should be decided by the day-to-day contact and according to the plans which will result.

As for the reference of a brother to Syria as a country assumed to be ruled by the Ba'th Party, our attitude to this matter is very clear cut. The 8th Regional Congress recompiled all the miscellaneous items of party literature in order to establish a clear position on the question of the Party in Syria. I have nothing more to add on this subject but I should like to say that we are entirely ready to co-ordinate

and exchange views with any Arab regime, however different in composition and system of rule it may be, and without my having to mention any name or refer to any party to the exclusion of another. We are ready to co-ordinate and exchange views to serve the interests, struggle and future of our Arab people, to thwart the plans of imperialism and to strengthen the trend which rejects the attempts to undermine the Arabism of any region and any part of the Arab homeland. This applies to Syria and to any other Arab regime including Saudi Arabia. This does not imply that we are going to abandon our ideas or stop propagating the points of view which we consider right. But we shall not allow that to prevent us from co-ordination with others wherever it is possible, advantageous and necessary.

It is said that Iraq is a Soviet colony! We shall never become a colony of anyone. Our clear policy shows that we shall never become a colony. As for Soviet policy it is the Soviet Union which has the right to speak about it, but we understand that on its side it does not aspire to acquire colonies. Friendship in the world is based on clear foundations. There is another question related to this issue. How do we see and conceive the basis of friendship with the Soviet Union in the light of past experiences? To start with, there must be friendship. There is a difference between a friendship based on strategic concepts and a relationship based on the opportunity for an accord concerned with a short-term aim, interest or issue. When we say that we are friends with such and such a side we mean that we are friends in the context of the Pan-Arab struggle and not in the context of this country's struggle and objectives alone. We believe that what has happened between some Arabs (and the Soviet Union) was not friendship. It is very clear that we have a particular attitude towards the Palestine

question at a time when the Soviet Union adopts a different attitude. We act in the light of our attitudes and the policy connected with it, whilst the Soviet Union acts in the light of its own attitude and the policy based on it. This is something we can say frankly without hesitation or embarrassment and without experiencing any reaction from the Soviet side in this matter. In spite of the attitude, opinion or even reaction, if there should be any, of the Soviet Union, we are friends according to our concept and on the basis which we define in advance.

We join hands on this basis and accept this formula. Our absolute independence in internal, external and Arab policies and non-interference in the affairs of either party are the basis for our friendship with the Soviet Union. There are certain interests which lie within the framework of the strategic concepts based on our doctrines. These interests are not part of the commercial view of the current phase. We stand with the Soviet Union in the main political currents, namely anti-imperialism, the call for peace and support for the peoples struggling for freedom and socialism. As for the question of building socialism, we have our own premises. How do we support the peoples who are seeking aid in the world? We may part company, see eye-to-eye, or adopt identical positions. This is a different matter. These are, therefore, basic considerations which bring us together in our policy and relations, with our friend the Soviet Union. These matters were clear from the beginning. Our relationship did not take shape either accidentally or by deception; we did not say "Let us become friends", and then start attacking each other over the radio. We have different views, they explain to us the reasons for their position and we explain to them our own reasons. Through consultations, we may agree on certain matters or disagree and continue to disagree, as happened in regard

to Arab policies and the Palestine problem in particular — our understanding of this problem and our policy towards it.

There are clear indications that we have our own policy, which sometimes coincides with Soviet policy in some of its aspects and diverges in other aspects. Yet our relations with the Soviet Union have never deteriorated; on the contrary they have clearly become stronger now and with more emphasis on friendship within the framework of the interests based on ideology and in accordance with the strategic conceptions of both parties to the exclusion of any exploitation of either party by the other.

Why hasn't the Iraqi army returned to Syria? Wherever there is a definite opportunity and firm plan for the use of armies on the basis of an agreed and clear policy relating to phased strategic aims, we'll find the Iraqi army there. This is our policy. We don't have a surplus army to send to any place where two or three shots are heard. We have an army prepared for a true patriotic and nationalist need. We won't have any hesitation whenever there is an occasion for a proper use of the army based on a clearly agreed policy in regard to the aims of our phased strategy.

This applies to Syria as much as to Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, once any of them is involved in any conflict or attempt involving the defence of any Arab land. It also applies to any one of the states and emirates of the Gulf without exception, as much as it applies to Iraq itself. The Iraqi Army will be used in defending their soil and sovereignty when it is needed because Iraq is part of the Arab homeland.

How do we assess Soviet policy towards the Palestine question in the light of Iraq's dealing with the Soviet Union? I think that my previous answer is clear and the Soviet leaders are definite in the way they declare their opi-

nions and attitudes. I have nothing more to add in this regard.

Does Iraq help Lebanon in facing the oil problem? We have a signed agreement with Lebanon covering the period to the end of 1975 in regard to the pipeline transit royalties and also to the assistance given by the Iraqi Government in response to the Lebanon's needs for oil. In brief, the agreement provides for pumping forty per cent of the quantity produced via Lebanon and the remainder via Syria. Lebanon receives 11 US cents per barrel passing through this pipeline in addition to a certain quantity of oil for internal consumption and preferential prices which do not exceed the real production cost of the oil. This is the agreement signed by Iraq and Lebanon.

About the Palestine question: Here is a question which says: What effect do we expect the Geneva conference to have on Palestinian policies? There is also another question related to it: What do you offer to the Palestinian revolutionaries who reject these policies (i.e. those represented by the trend towards negotiations with Israel), together with their results?

A third question also related to this subject asks for an opinion on those Arab states which say that we should leave the Palestinians to decide their policy towards the question of Palestine.

We shall deal with the central issue first and then move on to the fringes of the question. We do not say "Let us leave the Palestinians to decide the question of Palestine", and we are not among those who say, "Let us leave the Syrians to decide the fate of Syria" or the Egyptians to decide the fate of Egypt. The Egyptians and Syrians themselves, according to their declared statements and the policy which was actually followed after the October War, did not say that they would decide their fate on their own.

In our actual programmed policy which is now being carried out, there are indications pointing in this direction. When we sent our army to fight on the northern and western fronts it was not for the defence of Iraqi territory. It was fighting to defend an Arab Land. When an Arab fights and offers the most precious thing he possesses — his blood — he is certainly not doing so over surplus resources as a form of international aid or friendly assistance. We acted as Arabs, fought as Arabs and carried on the fight with all and not part of our strength. We put all our weight behind the battle. On this basis we have the right, derived from our ideology and by virtue of the actual politics and conduct associated with it, to say: We cannot allow the Palestinians to decide by themselves only. They can make decisions on behalf of the Arab people, but only in the right direction. This would be the option for any responsible statesman in regard to the question of sovereignty and the question of the Arab homeland. This is the cause which is defended and fought for by all Arabs, the cause for which the efforts of millions of our people are mobilised. This has been the central slogan of the Arabs since 1948 and before. No one can dispose of this matter on behalf of the Arabs in any way which leads away from the right goal.

There remains the matter of obligations related to this. We should exert our efforts at every opportunity, not in the way which is advocated by the others but in the way we hasten to recommend to the others.

It is clear to our Palestinian brothers that we are ready to put at their disposal every possible assistance which we can give within our potentialities, as they and not we assess them, to preserve their rights to help them maintain their position firmly and to carry on the struggle towards their final aims without retreat, concessions, weakening or bargaining. We make no secret of this position. We

declared it and we continue to declare it. We know that we are paying an unusually high price for it. We also know that had we remained in isolation within our own country, imperialism would have left us in peace. Had we kept silent when the fighting had been stopped, had we withdrawn our army and returned to within our borders to occupy ourselves solely with our own problems, the imperialists' attempts against us would have been less during this period, and the imperialists would have left us in peace for the time being in expectation of the next stage. We realise that this policy gives us trouble but we are pursuing it nevertheless. I think that had Iraq adopted a position other than its present one, the peaceful solution would not have encountered the difficulties that it has done. The Arab masses as well want to hear different voices. There are voices from some states and from some of our Arab people which are at variance with the other voices, and pursue their own line. Yet, the voice which rings out high and loud is not the same as that which is whispered quietly. We consider our voice echoes afar and must therefore be taken into account.

The Oil and the Battle

In regard to the questions: Was oil used as a weapon in the battle in the proper way? Was the use of oil as a weapon a substitute for the use of arms in the battle? Will there be a split as a result of the differing points of view of Iraq and other Arab countries regarding the policies of using oil as a weapon? Will this split continue for a long time?

We must establish a historical fact. Iraq was the first state which called for the use of oil as a weapon in the battle. It was the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and no other organisation in the Arab homeland or the world which bore

this slogan. This is a historical fact beyond dispute. We carried this slogan before the war and we carried it on the 7th October. We called for it earnestly and implemented it directly. We went on carrying the same slogan and insisting on it, even when it embarrassed some Arab countries. What is, therefore, the whole meaning of this slogan which was first advocated and translated into practical terms successfully by the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, the leading organisation of this country? We did explain this, and conveyed it in a memorandum submitted to the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Arab states at a meeting held in Cairo a few months before the October War. You may read these documents. Since then we have put forward this slogan not as mere words but in the form of legislation, if I may say so — that is a form translating this slogan into practical steps with a legal framework. We said to our Arab brothers then: "We are an oil state. Therefore, do not think of us as trying to outbid others politically. When we submit this slogan we do so in a fraternal spirit and with an appreciation of its effectiveness. We shall be the first to implement it and give it a start in Iraq. Let us be *fedayeen* (self-sacrificers)." As part of this slogan we said that the oil states which were capable of nationalisation should nationalise America's share (of the oil) and threaten with nationalisation any country which adopts a similar attitude to that of America.

The nationalised oil should not be sold to the same parties whose share had been nationalised, but should be sold to companies and other countries to gain an advantage in the world and to strengthen Arab policies in the international field. Arab countries which cannot nationalise should put an effective embargo on the export of oil to America. They should apply the same embargo to any country adopting a similar attitude to that of America.

When war broke out on 6th October, the leadership adopted three linked and interdependent resolutions. One of these was to reach a political solution to our problem with Iran, and to announce the restoration of diplomatic relations with Tehran, and our readiness to receive an Iranian delegation to Iraq or send an Iraqi delegation to Iran to solve the outstanding problems in these terms. The second resolution was to send the Iraqi army to the northern front (with Israel i.e.Syria), as we had aircraft on the western front (i.e. Egypt) prior to the war. Our aircraft took part in action on the western front, as is well known. The third resolution was to nationalise America's share (of the Basrah Petroleum Company) on account of her attitude towards the question of the Arab cause in particular. We may put it on record that not every Arab state was willing, at the beginning, to endorse the resolutions which were adopted. Our President sent representatives to the Arab states and we were told in clear terms: "We cannot pursue this cause. We provide money, but tampering with the oil is something which we consider unacceptable."

Here the role of our "hard currency" began, the role of the masses. This was the sweeping torrent which made everybody search for a way to dam the force which had been created by the circumstances of war. These resolutions were adopted in the evening of 6th October, and on 7th October we announced the nationalisation of America's share because of her attitude. We do not want to outbid our Arab brothers, as everyone has his own circumstances and capabilities, but we should like to say: it would have been possible for all the Arabs to adopt a stronger position than the one which they adopted if policy had been co-ordinated without any special considerations. Some Arab states should have been able to take a better stand than the one actually taken if they had been able to resist or dissociate

themselves from the policies of imperialism. "Such is our policy", we said. "Some to stop pumping oil to America and some to nationalise." A resolution was then adopted at the conference held in Kuwait providing a preliminary reduction of pumping by five per cent, that is five per cent of total pumping. This rate was stepped up with the continuation of the war. Had the war continued for two months a lot of matters and ideas would have been changed in the Arab homeland. We do not support a total stoppage of pumping. Why cut off oil to West European countries which are not hostile to us?

Should we endeavour to win more enemies? Or reduce their number, win friends and make others neutral? Our policy is the latter. Therefore, we believed and we still do believe that it was wrong at that time to apply a general embargo on oil exports.

There are, therefore, differences of opinion, but this does not prevent the co-ordination of Arab oil policy for the sake of mutual interests. There is no rupture but co-ordination between us and the Arab oil states. Attending the OPEC conference or the OAPEC whenever necessary and as circumstances require is the basis of our oil policy. Therefore, it was we who raised the slogan of using oil as a weapon in the battle. As far as we are concerned there has been no alternative to the use of this weapon. We adopted three associated and complementary resolutions which together make up the policy pursued by this Government. They involved the despatch of the Army beyond our frontiers to participate in the war, the nationalisation of America's share, and later on the nationalisation of the share of Holland.

In regard to our other brothers we believe that many Arabs played their parts according to their capacity. Some did it with money, some by backing up the oil policy, some by giving arms and some by contributing all these things.

As for our policy towards Turkey, we have good relations with Turkey and try to make them even better in political and economic terms. There are joint projects under discussion between us and Turkey. We supply her with a quantity of our oil. This is briefly our assessment of Iraqi-Turkish relations. Their development depends on the will of both parties and their policies within their limitations. As far as we are concerned we are willing to develop our relations with Turkey, and through our dealings with her we feel that she also wants to see the development of her relationship with us. How far this will go is a question which only the future can answer.

Oil and Oil Prices

In answer to the question about Iraq's attitude to the sale of oil at reduced prices to Islamic states, we can say from the very beginning that our policy is based on satisfying as much as possible the oil needs of friendly states and the states which adopt a neutral attitude toward the question of the Arab nationalist and the Iraqi patriotic struggle, that is the states which are not opposed to our struggles.

Our dealings with the other states are based on strict commercial considerations, but even these are not unrelated to the attitudes of these states towards the question of our nationalist and patriotic struggle. Turkey falls within the first category, that of the friendly states, and not the second category. On this basis we have provided a quantity of oil to Turkey and we are ready to give positive consideration to any request from her in the future. The question of prices is likewise decided in the first place on the basis of equality. However, in matter of detail we do take into consideration the existence of the two categories to which I have just referred. Our brothers, the Turks, know how much we are

charging them for oil, and how much we are charging the others.

Relations with Kuwait

The sons of the people of Kuwait are our brothers and not just our neighbours. There are more extensive relationships between Iraqis and Kuwaitis in certain fields than there are between Iraqis and other Arabs. The desire of all of us has been and still is to maintain a natural relationship which safeguards good neighbourliness and strengthens our fraternal ties. There was a problem related to the demarcation of borders. Iraq had not given an opinion on this question of accepting the demarcation of the borders for many reasons. We later informed our Kuwaiti brothers of our agreement to demarcate the borders, so that this problem should no longer be conjured up as a spectre to frighten the Kuwaitis from implementing their schemes and plans, for this would be contrary to the interests of the Kuwaitis, the Iraqis and the Arab nations.

Talks have been held on this subject and we shall continue to exchange views on the matter. We are earnestly working towards resolving this issue in accordance with the interests of Iraq and Kuwait as two states and also within the framework of the interests of the Arab nation in the region of the Gulf and the whole of the Arab homeland.

As for the duality in our political attitudes towards the states of the Gulf, as one of our brothers imagined when he said, "You have a friendly policy at state level and another policy at the level of popular organisations and the people's conferences which you hold", I begin by saying: There are no contradictions in our policy insofar as it concerns the conduct of the state and the conduct of its party organisations and conferences, but it is not necessary for our

policies to be identical down to the last detail. Diplomatic considerations are well recognised throughout the world. The same can be said about the activities of the masses and the peoples. Therefore, there is no duality in the policy although there may not be identity in the particulars, or in the expressions given to the particulars, of the policy of the state on the one hand and what is said or declared at some other mass conferences held in our country on certain occasions on the other. We must not forget that these conferences are often pan-Arab conferences or international conferences in which Iraq has only one vote and no more.

We do not look at our relationship with all the states of the Gulf and with all the Arab countries as being on the same level. This is natural. This is something which is decided by the policy of the Arab countries towards the Arab nationalist interest for which we are all struggling and not simply their policy towards us in a narrow sense. We endeavour to make our relationship normal. Our first condition or foundation for a normal relationship is that the emirate or state concerned must not jeopardise a major Arab nationalist interest. We cannot have a normal relationship with a state which relies on a foreign country and uses the forces of that country against our Arab people. We shall establish a normal relationship with any state which shows concern for the soil of the (Arab) homeland and the Arabism of the homeland in the Gulf, and we shall develop this normal relationship through fraternal consultations and discussions so that we may have closer relations which must be based on our nationalist and patriotic policies.

One of our brothers remarks that it is sometimes said or written that Iraq is using verbal slogans about the use of oil as a weapon. I have no answer to the question but I should like to ask this brother what he thinks. The policy which we

have outlined has not been expressed in words but in actions which are evident. Is it purely a verbal policy? Those who say that our policy is a policy of words, what can we do with them? We don't swear at them. We don't want them to swear at us. But if they have a different point of view we are prepared to hear it and discuss it with them so as to arrive at the best policy.

As to the question of Iraq's attitude towards the position of Syria in all its details from the starting of the ceasefire to the relations with the Palestinian Resistance, we do not want to go into details but we shall begin from the origin, from the core of the issue, and our answer has been formulated in our reply about our attitude towards our sister Syria as a state. Our attitude to Syria as a regime and our attitude in this particular issue towards those in charge of it may be defined in the light of the relationship between this subject and our attitude, beginning with our original views of the Arab/Zionist conflict and the question of rights. Where does it begin and where does it end? The conditions in the post-October War period are not qualitatively different in a negative way insofar as they are related to the potentialities of the Arab nation and the circumstances of the confrontation. In other words, nothing new has happened of a more negative character. We are still in the same negative framework as before the war. The fighting itself had ceased before the war. If the Palestinian Resistance used to say before the war, "Let us struggle in defence of Palestine, the defence of the whole land and reject any concessions, negotiations or truce", and so on, what new thing has happened anew which made them, or made some of them, say "There is now a new circumstance"? If there is a new circumstance it is in favour of the Arab struggle, in favour of gathering strength to carry on the struggle and not against it.

This means that the phase following 6th October argues more in favour of the struggle than the one which preceded the 6th October. We put this question to the brothers who are calling for the adoption of a new attitude on account of the new situation: is the new situation supposed to demand more determination in holding on to the political and ideological positions or a drift downwards towards concessions? We have not seen any new negative element added to the conditions which preceded 6th October. On the contrary, there are new and positive elements in favour of strengthening the struggle which are more pronounced in the post-October War period than ever before.

Economic Relations with Japan

We have decided to build up developed relations with Japan, both with the state and with commercial companies. We do not decide to build up developed relations with any state without preparing some foundations. As we decided to establish developed economic relations with Japan we endeavoured to bring these relations to the level which resulted in the agreement that has already been mentioned. It is more correct to say that it is an agreement to carry out projects and not for a loan in the conventional sense, because the contents of the agreement provide for the establishment of a refinery with a capacity of 15 to 20 million tons, a cement factory with a specific capacity, natural gas exploitation schemes and other projects. The basic reason why we believe that the Iraqi-Japanese relations in the field of economic co-operation offer wide opportunities is the knowledge that Japan has no political influence or expansionist aims in Iraq of a counter-revolutionary nature. Past relationships were not subject to any complexities which can inhibit the development of Iraqi-Japanese ties.

Question: In the beginning of your speech you mentioned that you knew that what happened was going to happen inevitably and you added that "it was bound to happen". What was it that was bound to happen?

The reference was related to the imperialist counter-revolutionary plans both in general and also in detail. They include the counter-revolutionary pocket in the Kurdish movement. On the basis of rational calculations we foretold the developments, their timing and the traditional and hostile forces and blocs involved.

Question: What did you expect from the October War? Do we understand from what you say that it was planned to end as it did?

We must avoid being specific in a way that may hurt others — not just out of courtesy. I do avoid making statements at a certain level. They may be unfair or inaccurate. We do say that all attitudes are based on rationality. They must be related to the requirements which have to be prepared for in advance and to any new and unexpected additional circumstances. In our conceptions there is nothing new and unexpected which calls for a retreat from, or a reconsideration of, our basic economic, military and political positions. There are developments which have surprised even responsible Arab individuals. This includes the way in which the Arab masses were mobilised and prepared for sacrifice, and in which the brave Arab soldier fought without having had any previous opportunity to fight under normal conditions. Had he been given the full opportunity in the subsequent days or months he would have shown his capacity to fight heroically. Therefore, we have some definite views on the question of the ceasefire and others which

have been made concerning the question of negotiations and the way in which these negotiations are being carried out.

As to the question about the military and civilians, I have a correction to make to the question. Please note: I have not said that there are civilians and military personnel in the party. In our party we cannot say so-and-so is a civilian and so-and-so is military. We say Staff Major Comrade So-and-so is a party member, Lieutenant-General So-and-so is a member of a divisional command in the party, Comrade So-and-so is a member of the Regional Command of the party. The Lieutenant-General reports to the member of the Regional Command although this member may not be a Lieutenant-General himself. This is our party system, which is applied in practice and not in wishful thinking or in theory. I should like to add: if you go now to the offices of all the responsible comrades in positions of responsibility you will see them sitting like myself in ordinary clothes, and not driving tanks.

Where does their power lie? The power of everybody from the President to the most junior member of the party depends on the strength of the policy pioneered and pursued, and also on the degree that the party adheres to the ideas for which we are struggling and which are taught to the men who are driving the tanks and holding the machine guns on the Eastern frontier, and the men who are standing at the ready to defend any part of Iraq and the Arab homeland. The military men were not the cause of the errors in former experiments. Over and above this there is the question of the experiments themselves. Were they revolutionary experiments or something else? A revolution is not the issue of a proclamation or the broadcast of a programme. It is a host of other and greater things starting from the conception of the programme and leading to its

implementation and the forms which are organically linked with the conceptions and programmes and which give them precise expression.

We have identified the fault as lying with the experiments and not with the Armed Forces. Had the experiments been truly revolutionary experiments, there would have been no defeat in the Armed Forces leading to the destruction of the revolution. This is the path which we follow in conception and in our policy. The Army and the Armed Forces in general in this country report to and implement the orders of the Party with faith and enthusiasm. I said "the Party" because there is no political entity other than the Party allowed to operate in the Armed Forces, as is agreed in the Charter of National Action. This is a justifiable matter.

Our evidence is that imperialism has tried for the last six years, which is not a very long period, and failed to influence one unit (of the armed forces), as you often hear of imperialism doing in the countries of the Third World. There may be in the Armed Forces, just as there may be within the trade unions or the staff of the Foreign Ministry, people who think in the opposite way. But can they present a threat to the revolution? We can say with confidence — and to reassure you as well — that there is no faction which can threaten the Revolution.

Question: Your Excellency, can you please explain what you meant by saying that there is both agreement and divergence between Iraqi and Soviet policies?

The clear nature of the friendly relationship founded on the basis which we have outlined makes it inconceivable that because of some agreement or difference of views our friends may adopt a position detrimental to our own independent policy. As for armaments, we shall acquire

whatever weapons may be obtainable and may benefit our Armed Forces, on the basis of pure and rational calculations and the relevant political considerations.

Thank you very much.

The National Front

This speech was given on 25th April 1974 in the National Assembly at a meeting convened by the High Committee of the Progressive National Front. The Front consists of the Ba'th Party (the leadership party), the Communist Party, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Revolutionary Kurdish Party and pan-Arab nationalists and other independent Iraqi nationalists. The meeting was attended by the sub-committees of the Front from all over the country. The programme of the National Front was called the Charter of National Action, published on 16th July 1973, the date of the establishment of the Front.

Once more I salute you, comrades, and salute your struggle and persistent efforts for the sake of the Progressive National Front. I also salute your struggle and efforts for the building up of a unified fraternal new Iraq.

When the committees of the National Front meet the High Committee at this place, it is necessary to deal with a number of issues and throw as much light on them as may facilitate your task in your work among the masses. The fruitful course for the National Front in its work among the masses depends on the clarity of its political line and on the way in which it deals with all problems whether related to this country or to the entire region and the whole world.

Self-criticism

We must first begin by assessing ourselves before looking at anything else. This country of Iraq and the members of the National Front have undergone many experiences — often bitter experiences — along the road of the wearisome struggle. I say, "often", because members of the National Front used to put the bulk of the blame at that time on external factors.

Each of the main political partners in the National Front now, namely the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party and the Com-

munist Party, has suffered a series of failures in the period between 1958 and 1963. Looking back at this particular stage we see that each of these two parties over-emphasised external factors in its analysis and considered them as the causes of the failures without paying serious attention in greater depth to the internal factors which were the real causes of the failure: reaction and its tools, imperialism and its tools and the right wing with its mentality and its interests. Their existence is not confined to the present time or the particular period of these failures, but goes back many years before that period. They still exist in Iraqi society. The forces of reaction exist in the form of ideas, interests and tools of imperialism. These tools are different here, of course, from those which exist in reactionary countries. They exist here as remnants in the minds and desires of some people. They exist as tools in the northern region of our beloved Iraq. The evidence of this is the pockets which are now carrying arms against the Revolution, against the Iraqi people (whether Arabs, Kurds or minorities), against autonomy, against the unity of the homeland and against the revolutionary and progressive march of liberation in this country.

Therefore, and despite this stage which we have passed through along the road of the Revolution and the road of new reconstruction, there are still some tools of reaction in Iraq.

Let us ask ourselves: were the potentialities of the nationalist movement in the period from 1958, following the July Revolution, to the end of 1963 greater or smaller according to the conventional formulas or by conventional standards, than they are now or between the years 1968 and 1970?

By conventional standards they were greater potentialities at that time. But when measured by the more

developed standards and examined on the basis of the march and the measure of success, we find that the potentialities are much greater now. Indeed there is no comparison with the potentialities of the National Front of that period.

Past failure of the National Front

Why did the National Front fail during that period?

Why do we see it now advancing along its correct path successfully and firmly? The secret of this lies in internal factors, in maturity and learning from experience, in correct analysis and correct positions, in the curbing of unwarranted emotions, in suppressing the urge to take short-term temporary views which always stemmed from erroneous calculations and were often reached at the expense of the strategic and long-term objective.

Let us, therefore, derive from this a way of examining ourselves and others, and examining the march, our future prospects and future requirements also.

When a gap is created between you as national partners in this National Front, don't tell us that the forces of reaction have acted effectively in the mid-Euphrates or the right wing managed to beat us in Basrah.

First ask where you made mistakes yourself. Bring yourself to account so that you may discover what opportunities you gave the rightists and the reactionaries, and what opportunity you gave, consciously or unconsciously, to the imperialists so that they could penetrate your ranks and your activities and force you to come to the High Committee of the National Front to solve the problems or to bridge the gap created by the imperialists and reactionaries and penetrated by the rightists.

In the past experience of political action in Iraq, we have

all tasted the bitter results of taking the short-term temporary view and treating issues hastily, and we have all paid an unusually high price because of this. We must, therefore, make our calculations with a new approach which must lie, according to our assessment, within the conceptual framework which I have briefly outlined, and which is extensively discussed in the Charter for National Action.

The challenge of imperialism

We cannot help being what we are because no noble struggler of any patriotic political movement or decent citizen of the people can accept vacillation, bargaining, humiliation or retreat.

We have started on the first stage of our forward march but the signs do not indicate that we are at the end of the march.

We are still only defining our aspirations, still at the beginning of the road which we have resolved to cover — the road of building socialism, fighting imperialism and making this country a safe base, a vital bastion for the Arab struggle in general and a model experiment illuminating the entire region of the Middle East. This is not a short and easy road.

It is natural, therefore, to see these phenomena around us in various shapes. Sometimes they take the form of armed pockets in the highlands, at others they take the form of an economic crisis and black market activities. Another form is the launching of a propaganda war against Iraq outside our borders. On still other occasions they mobilise forces on our eastern border and rattle their guns in the hope of intimidating us, making us hesitate or compelling us to accept bargaining. Time and time again many different types of weapons are produced and added to their arsenal.

Let nothing you hear or read intimidate you or weaken your resolve. This is a real opportunity for you to produce new methods and innovations to confront and torment imperialism, which is trying out its most modern methods and technical and scientific devices against you.

We are proud that imperialism is experimenting in this area with the best products of its laboratories and the most exhaustive data obtained from its electronic computers. We shall be even prouder when we see the imperialists — tails between their legs — defeated and disappointed. We know that this has been their fate and will be their fate on all the fronts which they try to open against us. We are confident that it is the people who will triumph, the people with their patriotic forces struggling under the banner of the National Front.

No events will ever detract from our confidence, however serious and far-reaching they may be. Our confidence will not be eroded by the widening of the conflict and the ferocity of our enemies. No, this will make it even more solid and unshakable.

Should any Iraqi citizen try at any time to conceive the most effective line of action he will have to review the methods and positions of the opposing forces. By doing so he will be able to assess the validity of his actions.

The forward march and the imperialists

We and the entire Iraqi people feel proud that world imperialism is annoyed by our march and by our country, a tiny country of barely ten million souls in this region.

But along the road of revolution and reconstruction there are more causes for pride, satisfaction and the energetic continuation of the struggle without vanity. The need is for us to carry on along the same road resolutely and more

optimistically for the sake of building up the new society, the purpose of all our struggles.

These are briefly the matters which we wanted to discuss at this meeting with you. We shall listen attentively to your ideas and problems and deal with them according to their subject and their area of responsibility. Our hope is to see the spirit of true comradeship prevail, not only at your casual meetings, but also in your daily work itself.

It is the kind of comradely spirit which you feel for another comrade or colleague in your committee as you bid him good-bye with respect in your heart and a desire to remember his opinions and discuss them seriously. It is also our hope that you will endeavour to deepen the democratic experiment in your dealings with one another. Please remove from your mind the idea of a single ruling party and a transient National Front with only a temporary function. If we all wanted it this way, we would have disposed of the Front's work entirely.

Thank you.

Comments on Proposals

Saddam Hussein commented on a number of proposals submitted by the delegates during the discussions and said:

We should like to give an opportunity to those comrades who may want to talk about some vital matters. Other brothers spoke and stressed the importance of dealing with these matters. We shall define our attitude towards some of them and deal with the rest by laying down direct guidelines.

Before I begin I should like on behalf of the High Committee of the National Front to thank those comrades who spoke with great concern for the National Front, its forward march, the need for comradely co-ordination and

co-operation between members of the Front, and the need to carry out the tasks set out by the Charter of National Action.

We are looking forward to the day when enthusiasm is equally shared by everybody with the same psychological outlook. I refer to this point because up to now we have not all had the same enthusiasm.

We are all bound by the principles of the National Front and the Charter of National Action, but there is a difference between accepting it as an obligation and as an undertaking derived from faith in the work of the Front. There must be faith even in the details of our daily work and in the importance of removing the obstacles which stand in the way of agreement.

I have noted as an example that speakers from the Front Committees of the northern governorates showed greater enthusiasm and faith in the Front and the importance of consolidating its programme in the details of daily work than the comrades from the other governorates.

That was very clear, and no strong evidence was needed to convince the observer of the degree of enthusiasm derived from the genuine faith in the hearts of those comrades which showed in every word they said, every proposal they submitted and every point of criticism they raised against an erroneous attitude. The reason is clear: their day-to-day experience of battle and of last-ditch trenches purifies them of the residues of the past and strengthens their absolute faith in the programme of the Front. The battles which lie ahead of us in all the governorates will ensure that we shall all have the same enthusiasm as the comrades who came from the northern region or the northern governorates of the country.

We must admit here that our work lacks co-ordination in the matter of central directives, and the Secretariat of the

Front bears the responsibility. After this meeting, at which we have all heard some of our comrades complaining of this defect, and in view of the importance of dealing with it in the future, we shall spare no effort to provide for continuous and organic co-ordination between the centre and the partners of the Front, and between the High Committee and the partners and the branch committees in the governorates whether in regard to their proposals or the directives of the High Committee.

In connection with the proposals submitted by the committees that offices be opened for them, we call on these committees to seek rented accommodation, and after this meeting we shall produce plans for the building of offices for the committees of the Front in the governorates after securing the necessary financial allocations for this purpose. We shall also meet the needs for the daily administrative work of these offices after debating this matter in the High Committee.

Some comrades remarked with emphasis on the importance of the application of the Autonomy Law and the fact that application is always more important than the theoretical achievements written on paper and broadcast as laws. What we say is that nothing written on paper has any value apart from its connection with applied reality. Yet we cannot apply something without a preconception, any more than we can call it a great achievement before putting it into practice in the day-to-day detailed work related to the economic, political and social life of the people.

We are resolved to carry out the Autonomy Law, and the High Committee of the National Front examined at its latest meeting the importance of speed in setting up the Autonomy organisations for the area of Kurdistan and finalising all practical measures related to this subject.

Efforts are continuing in earnest to create the Autonomy organisations and establish a democratic system compatible with the Charter of National Action and the Autonomy Law announced on 11th March 1974.

In reference to the subject of the Branch Committees of the National Front and their relationships with the administrative departments, we must clarify the matter by saying that the task of the National Front is to mobilise and lead the masses in the light of the Charter of National Action. This Charter is the practical guide to which the constitutional organisations of the state will refer.

The tasks of the committees

From the point of view of details, if the committees of the National Front think that they could take the place of the Governor, Qaymaqam (District Officer), or Sub-District Officer, their ideas must be both impractical on the one hand and erroneous when looked at from the ideological and political point of view.

There is no doubt that you don't have such thoughts for conventional reasons, but rather in response to the need of co-ordination, and in these terms the matter remains a legitimate subject for consideration. The question is how can it be achieved. It can be achieved by indirect means and occasionally direct means according to the circumstances and requirements of work in each governorate.

We must point out here that in the first phase in the life of the Revolution the organisations of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party used to ask to take the places of the Sub-District Officer and the Qaymaqam. They used to imagine that they had the capacity to replace them. Of course, we were faced with numerous problems as a result of this erroneous conception. We held many conferences at the level of senior

party cadres. This kind of notion existed sometimes at the second level of cadres and also at the level of rank and file members and supporters.

After long efforts we were able to put an end to this, although we haven't been able, up to the present day, to prevent all violations. It may happen occasionally that a member in Mishkhab or a member in Hindia behaves contrary to the approved conception of the Centre.

Therefore the idea of replacing the departments of the states by the Committees of the National Front is something which is categorically rejected by you and by us. The matter at issue is the process of co-ordination in terms of the practical measures which may help cut down the time taken up by a certain procedure designed to serve the objectives and purposes of the National Front.

The governorates of the northern area have a certain peculiarity which marks them out from the other governorates of the country: that is, they have an additional aspect in view of the circumstances prevailing there.

Our comrades in the National Front can at any time submit to us studies dealing with the related subjects in a clear and central manner.

The question of resolving the battle in favour of the national forces and in the interests of our people cannot be confined to actions of a military nature. From the very beginning, and on the basis of our political and ideological conceptions, the battle must be resolved in our favour by showing who has the correct ideas and whose opinions and attitudes give the maximum benefits to our people. We must not only be convinced ourselves but we must also convince the last Kurdish peasant in the remotest village of the northern area. This is the starting-point for the defeat of the adversary.

According to our analysis and conviction, this issue has

been resolved in our favour, but the matter may not yet have reached the last Kurdish citizen in the remotest village of the northern area. This is your basic and central task in regard to this area and also the task of the information media and our task in general: to convey this conviction and this analysis, through which the battle will be resolved in our favour, politically and ideologically, to the last Kurdish citizen in the northern area.

Military actions must also serve and follow this approach. The Committees of the National Front should be the best organisations to look after the necessary information activities. They can hold discussions and interviews in Kirkuk to outline the programme of the National Front, explain the Autonomy Law and its requirements, and unmask the deviationist policy of Barzani and his collaborators in a direct, explicit and detailed manner and make it clear that we will never sit and negotiate with these stooges around the same table. Barzani took ample tactical advantages from this in the past. The Kurdish citizens always felt that there might come a day in which those fighting on the side of the Revolution came to be at the mercy of Barzani. This day will never come and this must be well understood. It must be well understood that we will never fall back or hesitate before eradicating Barzani and his group. The most we can allow ourselves to imagine is to see him raise the white flag before it is too late and to live as an ordinary citizen and not put himself forward as a representative of the Kurds, a national movement or a political bloc, to sit with us around the same table and negotiate with us about the Kurdish question. This is something which is quite unacceptable, and it must be forcefully explained in elaborate detail to the Kurdish citizens, so as to remove any notion in their minds that they may come a day when Barzani will once more become the

absolute ruler surrounded by his henchmen throughout the northern area.

Regarding the difficult economic situation in the northern area referred to by one of our comrades, the Committees of the National Front are examining the best formulas for implementing the economic blockade.

We are determined to subject the area lying outside our control to severe blockade. This is part of the war operation whose dimensions as we conceived them have been explained and whose ideological, psychological, social, economic, political and military aspects we have outlined.

We shall send you a copy of the measures for implementing the economic blockade for your examination and comments, so that we may take your observations into account when we apply them.

Dealing with errors

We are not bound by any member of the government administration, whether military or civilian, who may not like the method with which we deal with the sons of our people, whether Kurds or Arabs. Those who commit wrong acts must realise what they are doing. Such acts should be referred to the Committees of the National Front for discussion and further reference to the Centre, because whatever you may say about the motives behind such acts they harm us politically and ideologically and postpone the day of victory by many months.

Every responsible person, whether a member of a party, the armed forces or the civil service, must act in a manner which is compatible with the central planning. This is a matter which allows no room at all for any trickery. The economic situation may endure some trickery, and any other problems which enter our head may allow a certain

margin for flexibility and turning a blind eye to improper acts, but the Kurdish question leaves no room for any mistake in the present stage or in any of the coming stages. We must be immaculately correct in our behaviour and in our dealings with the individuals of our people and particularly our Kurdish people.

We must bear in mind that wrongs are not always committed intentionally according to preconceived ideas. They are sometimes committed by a person who imagines that he is dealing with matters correctly, in which case the mistake is all the more serious because the culprit here is a sincere person. Although the lack of bad intentions precludes any severe punishment, it must be kept in mind that even mistakes committed without any bad intention are not allowed and will be subject to control and disciplinary measures. They will be referred to higher authority responsible for dealing with them whether the guilty person is communist, Ba'thist, an ordinary citizen, or a military or civilian servant of the State.

We want to know of all such acts, which should be referred to us in accurate detail, supported with evidence and any other data related to the subject, so as to help us to investigate and take disciplinary measures which will not be for the sake of punishment but to indicate the right path and prevent any similar possible occurrences in the future. We shall ignore any report based merely on hearsay. This will be absolutely inadmissible.

I do not expect that what I have just said will lead to a reduction in the need for supervision, for the one who makes the plans is not always the one who carries them out. This means that it is beyond our ability to say now that there won't be any mistake, but we can say that from now onwards any such mistake will be subject to control and disciplinary action. There is always a gap between the mind

of the planner and the hand which conscientiously implements the plan, between the appreciations of responsible officials and the translation into practice.

We cannot say that the standards of soldiers in their relations with the public at the check-point in Erbil is at the same level as that of the officers who led operations in the area that was mentioned by one of our comrades. This does not excuse us for overlooking the need for correct guidance for control and for disciplinary action.

Whether you are Ba'thists, communists or independents from other political movements joining the National Front, in the future you will all face this question: how did you benefit from the National Front? This question will always be asked. This is one of the methods which are used to create psychological splits and widen them into gaps which are wide enough for our adversaries to penetrate.

Perhaps we may find from time to time that the benefits of the National Front seem very small, but if we measure these benefits against the strategic conception of our forward march for which we are all working with combined efforts for the sake of our people, we shall find immeasurable value in it every day.

Let us now reverse the question to those who raised it: what benefits shall we gain if we live at loggerheads with each other? This is the form which the question will take, and you will see the answer. Well, what did the Iraqi people and the whole country reap from the conditions created by past disputes? After this we can show them the different picture created by our Charter for National Action.

The benefits of the programme which we are implementing are according to its strategic calculations and conceptions. Do not allow yourselves to be drawn into constant petty discussions about the amount of benefit you are gaining.

Those who try dragging you into petty details do so with the intention of sowing doubt. It is your task to interest them in the strategic conception and then in the assessment of details in the light of the strategic conception, and not vice versa. As an example we can take the question about how the *fellahin* (farmers) benefited from the latest legislation in view of the direct benefits accruing to Government employees. This can be answered by saying that looking at the whole chain of economic measures, link by link, the benefits for the *fellahin* were considerable, and sometimes much greater than those for the government employees. This is because in addition to his work as a farmer the *fellah* may have a son at school and another in the armed forces, and may sell his crops to the employee whose purchase power has increased. If it were possible in the past for the *fellah* to sell only a certain quantity of his production because of the limited number of purchasers, he should be able now to sell larger quantities of his agricultural crops. The volume of the benefits reaped by the *fellah* may be measured in this way.

Those who try to involve you in petty details and question you about the benefits you have personally gained should be answered by reference to the whole chain of economic measures.

Comrades, we faced this question as Ba'thists in the past, as did our communist comrades, and we shall continue to face it at all times. Our answer to those who raise it is: what good would it have done if we had remained at loggerheads, killing each other, and how much advantage would the imperialists have gained from the situation? Over and above all this, our forward march is not always a matter of the benefits we gain.

There are those who try to assess the Revolution according to petty details. The Revolution must be judged

as a whole and according to its final outcome. You are aware of the experiences of revolutions. If you take the greatest revolutions in the world, whose value and practical application have been tested by years of experience, and then consider a certain limited period in the history of such revolutions and assess them on the basis of that period, they will end up by appearing in the most hideous light. If you take one small or special aspect of those revolutions you will judge them as unworthy for you to shed any tears over any calamity which may befall them.

The Revolution, the march and the National Front must be taken as a whole and not in part. If you take the total outcome in all its aspects it will make you and make us all proud of belonging to it.

Thank you.

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حـاديـث فـي القضـايـا الـراهنـة

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